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EXPERT WARNS OWNERS OF HIGHER COST HOMES COULD SUFFER

Property market awaits impact of Pfizer exodus

By **MARIKE COX**

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PFIZER'S decision to pull out of Sandwich could have repercussions for the property sector as well as the jobs market.

A leading law firm says it expects the drug giant's withdrawal and the loss of thousands of jobs to deflate the housing market at the top end.

Senior partner at Fosters Law, Edward Foster, said although the lower end of the market would most likely remain stable, those in homes worth £250,000 and upwards could be forced to drop their selling prices.

His warning followed the announcement by Pfizer that the pharmaceutical firm was leaving Sandwich, putting at least 2,400 jobs at risk and raising concerns that many people would leave the area.

Mr Foster, whose firm has offices in Broadstairs, Canterbury and Herne Bay, said: "If the market is suddenly filled with properties, prices will fall. It's supply and demand.

"Prices will be pushed down and properties in places such as Ash and Wingham, where it is usually more expensive to buy, will become more accessible.

"As soon as a large supply of properties enters the market it becomes a buyers' market. Pfizer employees may have to accept a lot less than what they paid for their properties."

Mr Foster said the impact would also affect rental homes where landlords would have to drop their charges.

"If you can get an executive four-bedroom house for £200 less, then no one is going to pay £200 more," he said. Mr Foster said another

CONTINUED ON PAGE TWO



WITHDRAWAL SYMPTOMS

The impact of drug giant Pfizer's closure of its European R&D base at Sandwich will be felt across east Kent in the jobs and property markets, say experts

Police crack down on graffiti yobs

A GRAFFITI crackdown is under way after a spate of senseless attacks across Deal and Sandwich.

In Walmer, graffiti yobs daubed cars with red and silver paint before defacing residents' homes.

The paint was removed immediately, but police officers said the attacks had caused great distress and inconvenience to the victims.

In Sandwich, a spate of graffiti incidents and arson at the train station, believed to be related to other vandalism in the town, prompted police to launch a clampdown on the problem.

FULL STORY - PAGE 2

Top soccer coach passes on skills

A FOOTBALL coach who helped nurture the talents of England and Chelsea star John Terry has been passing on his expertise to local youngsters.

Ted Dale, worldwide director at the David Beckham Academy, is continuing to set his sights on the future generations of footballers and treated students at Sandwich Technology School's football academy to a special insight into the game.

He coached various aspects of play and steered students through phases of the Football Association's youth coaching module.

FULL STORY - PAGE 2



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Pfizer staff may have to downsize as result of taking lower-paid jobs

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

effect of Pfizer leaving would be employees downsizing as a result of skilled workers having to take lower-paid jobs.

"This would increase demand at the lower end of the market and this area, up to £250,000, would therefore remain stable – supply and demand would balance out," he said.

"It's the people with homes priced above who will be most affected."

"We could see an exodus of highly-paid individuals and a consequential increase in supply of properties for sale or rent, particularly those towns and villages around Sandwich and Canterbury that make up the Pfizer corridor."

"This is unlikely to result in a wholesale property crash. Properties

in the area offer great value."

"Critically, it should be noted that the area now offers one of the best fully contained business parks in the country."

"East Kent remains a great place to live and work. We have a high-speed rail service that provides excellent links to London and the rest of the UK. Europe is a stone's throw away."

"We have a fantastic pool of talent coming from the schools and higher education, and the quality of life is hard to beat. If that cannot attract inward investment, what can?"

Another property expert said he wasn't convinced Pfizer's departure would push prices down or have a severe impact on the market.

Steve Evans, associate director of estate agents Oakwood Homes,

which has offices across east Kent, said he believed the housing market would remain stable.

However, he admitted Pfizer's decision could have an impact on the number of people moving to the area.

"I'm not expecting a large impact on the market in terms of property prices. A lot of this depends on the time frame of the Pfizer situation," said Mr Evans. "If we're looking at people leaving the area over two or three years it's probably not going to have a large impact."

"However, those looking to make an aspirational move to the area for work may reconsider the move."

"I think this will dampen demand."

• **For more news on the Pfizer saga and from around the country, see www.kentnews.co.uk.**

Crackdown as yobs paint the town red

By **MARIJKE COX**

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A GRAFFITI crackdown is under way after a spate of senseless attacks across Deal and Sandwich.

In Walmer, graffiti yobs daubed cars with red and silver paint before defacing residents' homes.

The paint was removed immediately, but police officers said the attacks had caused great distress and inconvenience to the victims.

In Sandwich, a spate of graffiti incidents and arson at the train station, believed to be related to other vandalism in the town, prompted police to clamp down on the problem.

PC Ian Woodland, who raised the issue at a Sandwich Town Council meeting, said arrests were anticipated in the near future.

"We hope that once these arrests have been made we will see a significant reduction in this type of offence."

"Graffiti has been a factor in the increase in crime in Sandwich this year, in part due to an overnight one-off spate in April 2010, just at the start of the counting year."

"Sandwich is a low crime ward and it is increasingly challenging to



ATTACKS: Vandals used emulsion

reduce crime year on year."

"A one-off spate, followed by intermittent acts of graffiti makes a significant impact on our local criminal damage stats."

"South Kent police targets areas prone to graffiti when on late shifts, and targets groups of young persons suspected of involvement."

A spate of attacks in Walmer at the beginning of the month saw offenders swap the traditionally-used spray paint for red and silver emulsion paint.

In just one night, eight vehicles and three houses were targeted across four areas; Grams Road, St Clare's Road, St Mary's Road and Church Street.

DS Chris Gurney said the incident had caused a great deal of distress, inconvenience and cost to those whose cars and homes were defaced.

"We are pursuing every line of enquiry to identify the offender or offenders, and will be taking additional steps to prevent any further offences being committed," he said.

PC Lee Rowlinson, who is investigating the attacks, added: "I would like to speak to anyone who has information about these incidents or anyone who may have seen discarded paint tins and brushes in the area."

"The paint used in all incidents appears to be emulsion, not spray paint."

Anyone with information linked to graffiti crimes is asked to contact south Kent police on 01622 690990 and quote crime number FY/1834/11.

Alternatively they can call Kent Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111.

Top coach visits academy

HE TRAINED England and Chelsea legend John Terry and has witnessed the changes in football coaching over the last two decades.

And now Ted Dale, worldwide director at the David Beckham Academy, is continuing to set his sights on the future generations of footballers.

Bringing his world-class coaching skills to Kent, Mr Dale treated students at Sandwich Technology School's football academy to a special insight into the game.

The coaching legend, who brought Chelsea and England defender John Terry through the ranks while acad-

emy coach at the London club, coached various aspects of play and steered students through phases of the Football Association's youth coaching module.

Director of football at Sandwich Technology School, Gary Owen, said: "Ted was my boss at Chelsea when he was academy director at the club, and his influence on young players, including John Terry, is well documented."

"He is a great coach and educator."

Students at the Sandwich Football Academy are due to take their FA Level Two coaching qualification.

Mr Owen said he hoped the

Beckham philosophy would help them towards success.

Two years ago the school gained funding for a full-size artificial grass pitch for use by students and the local community.

Costing £513,000, with 60 per cent of that cost given by the Football Foundation, the pitch is all-weather and flood-lit.

Anyone interested in joining Sandwich Technology School's football academy programme who is studying sports science and coaching should contact gary.owen@sandwichtech.kent.sch.uk or call Mr Owen at the school on 01304 610000.

Airport inquiry's opening skirmish

By MARIJKE COX

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CONTROVERSIAL plans for a multi-million-pound expansion of Lydd airport have seen opening skirmishes between supporters and opponents at a public inquiry.

The main parties involved were given 15 minutes to put their case at the inquiry at Shepway's Civic Centre, last week.

RSPB, Natural England, the Campaign to Protect Rural England, Kent Wildlife Trust and Lydd Airport Action Group cited their opposition, while representatives of London Ashford Airport (Lydd) spoke in favour.

The £25 million plans include a runway extension of almost 300 metres and a new terminal building capable of handling up to 500,000 passengers a year.

London Ashford Airport said the move would create hundreds of jobs and boost tourism. But campaigners protesting against the plans say the development would have a devastating impact on the environment and wildlife, cause excessive noise and



UNDER WAY: Lydd airport inquiry

create a risk to the public through its location to Dungeness nuclear power station.

Shepway District Council approved the plans last year, only for the Government to step in and order a public inquiry.

The inquiry is expected to last 13 weeks.

On behalf of Lydd Airport, Peter Village QC said: "There are the obvious and compelling benefits for the immediate locality and the wider region of making better use of this existing infrastructure as a small regional airport. It will offer important relief to the unsustainable pressure on the South East's other airports. There are the equally compelling benefits to the area in terms of job and business creation, and the significant socio-economic opportuni-

ties, coupled with the sustainable transport achievements that flow from providing a local opportunity for air travel to serve the area."

But Matthew Horton QC, on behalf of the Lydd Airport Action Group – which has been campaigning for six years – said Lydd was an "inappropriate site" for a regional airport.

He said the proposals failed to make a convincing economic case and that expansion would present an unnecessary and unacceptable risk to public safety due to aircraft taking off and landing through key migratory bird routes at close proximity to Dungeness power station.

The CPRE's county branch Protect Kent and the Kent Wildlife Trust also made a case against the plans.

A spokesman from the trust said: "We will demonstrate that the proposals have the potential to impact negatively, both directly and indirectly, upon many species which are recognised as being at risk of extinction in the UK."

"We will show that the full impact of the proposals has not been properly assessed, as a result of the inadequacy of the ecological work carried out in support of the applications."

A decision on the planning application will be made in late 2011.

• For more Shepway stories, see www.yourshepway.co.uk.

Half the woman she used to be

AN AMBITIOUS businesswoman who weighed more than 27 stone has shed half her body weight in less than two years.

Determined Lorraine Balcombe, from Folkestone, lost an impressive 13-and-a-half-stone – eight dress sizes – after she found her excessive weight was holding her back in her job.

The 38-year-old, who runs a business through a catalogue company with her husband, Ian, said being overweight and under-confident meant she struggled in key parts of her work, which included delivering and picking up brochures door-to-door.

After losing more than a stone by improving her diet and pounding the pavements at work, she underwent a gastric bypass operation in 2009.

Continuing a regime of healthy eating and regular exercise, in less than two years the mum-of-two lost 13-and-a-half stone, improving her work life and subsequently boosting the finances of the couple's Kleeneze business.

"My weight has always been a problem and over the years it's yo-yoed a lot," she said. "Before we joined Kleeneze, Ian and I both worked in the pub trade and years of being stuck behind the bar all day meant I'd really piled on the pounds."

"But being overweight meant I couldn't make the most of it and do as much of the physical side of the work as I wanted. We were doing well, but I knew we could make more of it if I was able to get out and about more."

Since her weight loss the couple now make an average of £1,800 a month and oversee their own team of



BEFORE: Lorraine Balcombe's weight had reached 27 stone

distributors.

"My job makes it easy to get lots of exercise during the working day which is really helping me stay fit, and I'm firmly on track to get down to my target weight of below 13 stone," said Mrs Balcombe.

"I'm so glad I took the steps to get myself in shape. I feel better than ever and my confidence has improved immensely. And the business is doing so well now that I'm reaping both the health and the financial benefits of slimming down."

Home shopping company Kleeneze said 68 per cent of its 10,000 distributors lose weight through their work.



AFTER: Two years into her diet and Lorraine is looking great



THE HOOSIERS: Performing Marsh Academy acoustic set

Chart-toppers charmed by 'audience of wonder'

SELF-proclaimed 'odd-pop' band The Hoosiers performed an acoustic set for students at the Marsh Academy.

The chart-topping group, whose debut album The Trick To Life reached number one, played for 140 pupils who had achieved top behaviour and attendance at the school in New Romney along with post-16 students.

Performing hits Worried About Ray, Goodbye Mr A, plus their new single, Bumpy Ride, the band were given a warm reception by pupils who later questioned them about their journey into the music industry.

The gig was organised by assistant principal Richard Robinson, who said The Hoosiers put on a fantastic show.

"We are very grateful to them for coming to the Marsh Academy," he said.

"It was a well-deserved reward for those students who put in a lot of hard work and effort every day at school. The Hoosiers were incredibly generous with their time and managed to engage all of the students during their performance.

"They also taught pupils about some of the unusual instruments they used, so this was the perfect blend of an educational experience and reward which was enjoyable and entertaining."

According to Mr Robinson, the band enjoyed the experience so much they may come back to the academy in the summer.

Lead singer Irwin Sparkes wrote on Twitter that he loved playing at the Marsh Academy.

He called the students an "audience of wonder". He added: "Cool to meet bags of you and great to be playing live."

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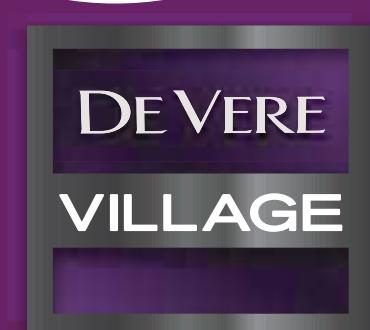


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Gorilla's walking antics get 5m YouTube views

LITTLE more than a month ago, gorilla Ambam was an undiscovered talent living a quiet life in his enclosure at Port Lympne Animal Park, *writes Marijke Cox.*

But like the many YouTube sensations before him, all it took was a moment of magic captured on camera to send him to the dizzying heights of stardom.

Since the 20-year-old silverback western lowland gorilla was filmed walking on his hind legs like a human, he has become a global star with the footage viewed across



YOUTUBE SENSATION: But bemused Ambam can't see what all the fuss is about

the world almost five million times.

The first 18-second piece of film reached a massive three million views, but after claims the clip was fake, staff at Port Lympne uploaded a second film which has received almost two million hits.

Visitors now flock to the gorilla enclosure at feeding time in the hope of catching the 34-stone beast having a two-legged stroll.

Phil Ridges, head gorilla keeper at the park, near Folkestone, said staff were totally unprepared for the response.

"Ambam has been exhibiting this behaviour his whole life," he said.

"Just days after uploading the clip the phones were ringing off the hook with people wanting to know about Ambam and we were inundated with requests from around the world for interviews and information.

"We have had a lot of speculation that it is a man in a gorilla suit or that he has been trained to do this but Ambam has not been trained in any way, it is just something he chooses and is able to do."

Mr Ridges said there have been more visitors to the gorillas at feeding time.

"Ambam doesn't seem to know what all the fuss is about," he said.

"While his bipedal tendencies have captured the imagination of people worldwide we are hoping that his fame will have the more serious effect of highlighting the plight of the critically endangered western lowland gorilla.

"The charity that runs our parks, The Aspinall Foundation, is well known for its work with gorillas both at Howletts and Port Lympne and overseas, where we protect more than one million acres and reintroduce captive gorillas back to protected areas of the wild."

Footage of Ambam was filmed by animal researcher Johanna Watson, while she was

working with the University of Manchester on a project about apes.

Mr Ridges said the behaviour was not unusual for the species.

"All gorillas can do it to some extent, but we haven't got any who do it like Ambam and he is quite a celebrity at the park," he said.

"We think he might use it to get a height advantage to look over the wall when keepers come to feed him.

"Standing up can also help him in looking for food generally in his enclosure.

"Ambam can also carry a lot more food if he stands and uses both hands, and walking on two feet also means he doesn't get his hands wet when it is raining."

• *Visitors to Port Lympne can see Ambam and the rest of his group being scatter fed daily at noon and 3pm.*



Climb into cockpit to mark 75th anniversary of Spitfire

SEVENTY-five years ago chief test pilot Captain Joseph "Mutt" Summers took to the skies in what was to become the most iconic fighter aircraft in history – the Spitfire.

The historic first flight of the prototype marked the beginning of a great love affair between the RAF and the aircraft which became legendary during the Battle of Britain in the fight against the Luftwaffe.

After pilot Capt Summers finished the test flight he is said to have turned to engineers and said: "Don't touch a thing."

The prototype was converted into a fighting machine but was lost in September 1940 during the height of the Battle of Britain.

To celebrate the momentous inaugural flight on March 5, 1936, a unique replica will be on display at the Battle of Britain Memorial at Capel-le-Ferne near Folkestone.

The imitation Spitfire K5054, built by the Spitfire Society, will be the centre piece of a weekend of celebrations on Saturday, March 5, and Sunday, March 6.

It was first unveiled in 1993 by Jeffrey Quill, one of the original Spitfire test pilots who proposed a replica be built to recognise the contribution made to British



UNIQUE: The replica Spitfire on display

military aviation by designer R J Mitchell.

During the weekend of celebrations visitors will be able to sit in the cockpit and have their picture taken.

Only Fools and Horses star John Challis, who played Boycie, and broadcaster Michael Aspel are taking to the skies alongside a Spitfire after they bid in a silent auction, held by the Battle of Britain Memorial Trust.

An aerial display will also be put on during the celebrations and the 212 Squadron Royal Air Force Living History Group will explain more about people and their various roles during the Battle of Britain in World War Two.

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THE Archant KOS Media's Travel and Leisure Show will have a certain *je ne se quoi* about it this year as a huge French contingent heads to our shores.

Back for a fourth year, the show at the Dover Cruise Terminal offers visitors great ideas for day trips, weekend breaks, and holidays abroad.

And this time there will be a special new Pas De Calais Zone to highlight what is on offer with our friends across the channel.

There will be 17 companies representing France at the show, which has drawn crowds of 4,000 people in previous years.

Archant KOS media events manager Liz Hare said: "Every year the show goes from strength to strength, with many return visitors saying they wouldn't miss it for the world."

"We have a completely new area this year devoted entirely to France, featuring French companies who have come across the Channel to take representation.

"Since its launch three years ago this show has been very successful, and with the registrations pouring in and loads of prizes on offer, I hope this year will exceed expectations."

The stands will include beer tasting, souvenir making as well as the two presentations being given in the theatre.

This year's show will run during British Tourism Week, which aims to raise awareness of the importance of Britain's visitor economy.

Organisers behind the national event, which runs from March 12 to 20, gave Archant KOS Media official accreditation for the annual Travel and Leisure Show.

Visitors will be treated to a host of exhibitors from top travel and ferry companies, as well as information about attractions in Britain and Kent for those planning to holiday at home.

Guests will also be in with a chance of winning a

selection of prizes, including a two-week cruise courtesy of the Fred. Olsen Cruise Line.

After last year's show won the praise of the travel industry, many companies put in early reservations to secure stands in 2011.

Roy and Margaret Jones, from Go Cruise, said: "We're trying to think of words that would sum up the show like fantastic, best show ever, great organisation, amazing, but it doesn't really sum up how good we find the show."

There will be a full programme of talks throughout the day covering a wide range of travel and leisure activities. Food and drink, and a licensed bar, plus children's entertainment – including nail art and face painting – will ensure a fun and informative day for all the family. Entry is free and free parking will also be available.

The Archant KOS Media's Travel and Leisure Show will run from 10am to 4pm on Sunday, March 13 at the Dover Cruise Terminal.

For more details about the show see www.thetravelandleisureshow.co.uk or call Liz Hare on 01303 817172.

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Show is great place to plan your holiday

By MARIJKE COX

marijke.cox@kosmedia.co.uk

THERE are just two weeks to go before Archant KOS Media's popular Travel and Leisure Show makes its welcome return.

Hoping to follow the success of previous years, the 2011 event promises to be better than ever, with a huge host of attractions.

For the first time in its four-year history the show, which last year attracted 4,000 visitors, will feature a French contingent dedicated to promoting the continent.

Visitors to the event, at the Dover Cruise Terminal from 10am to 4pm on Sunday, March 13, will also be in with a chance of winning a selection of prizes, including a two-week cruise, courtesy of Fred. Olsen Cruise Line.

Archant KOS Media events manager Liz Hare said: "Every year the show goes from strength to strength, with many people returning, saying they wouldn't miss it for the world."

"We have a completely new area this year, devoted entirely to France and featuring 17 French companies who have come across the Channel to take part in the show for the first time."

"Since its launch, this show has been very



PACKED: Visitors to last year's show found plenty to interest them, and this year's show promises to be bigger and better than ever

successful and with the registrations already pouring in and 41 prizes on offer, I hope this year will exceed all expectations."

This year's show will run during British Tourism Week, which aims to raise awareness of the importance of Britain's visitor economy.

Organisers behind the national event, which runs from March 12-20, gave Archant KOS Media official accreditation for its annual Travel and Leisure Show.

Visitors will be treated to a host of exhibi-

tions from top travel and ferry companies, as well as information about attractions in Britain and Kent, for those planning to holiday at home.

Owners of the county's historic sites, gardens, attractions and other hidden gems will also be exhibiting.

Last year's show won the praise of the travel industry, with many putting in early reservations to secure display stands in 2011.

Sarah Hirsch, of Dickens World, said: "I was trying to think of words that would sum



up the show, like fantastic, best show ever, great organisation, amazing, but it doesn't really sum up how good we find it."

"The show has gone from strength to strength over the last three years."

The event will host presentations on a wide range of travel and leisure activities, with exhibitions running throughout the day.

There will be hot and cold food and drinks, and face-painting and nail art for children.

Entry is free, and free parking will also be available.

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JULIE MADDOCKS

Costly? They're absolutely priceless

IT WAS a bit of a shock this week to read that the average cost of raising a child has crashed through the £200,000 barrier.

According to research, parents are typically shelling out £9,610 a year to feed, clothe and educate each new member of their family, and that the average bill for raising a child from birth until the age of 21 is about £270,000.

From nappies to cots, shoes to dentists' bills, bicycles to school trips and after-school clubs, the costs are endless. Frighteningly though, I wouldn't mind guessing that could well be a conservative estimate.

From the moment our little boys were born I couldn't wait to lavish them with stuff – toys, clothes and treats. My heart was bursting with pride and love and, as always, I'd do anything to ensure they have all they need in life.

But that's where I draw the line – recognising the difference between need and sheer want.

I've lost count of how much I've spent over the past 20 years, but also the number

of times I've used my mantra of "Do you really need it, or simply want it?" when they've claimed they need a new X, Y or Z.

Despite our lads now heading for the age of childhood cut-off point, the expense continues: university fees, driving lessons, clothes, food and outings.

I'm sure they'd like to rely on the Bank of Mum and Dad, but to be fair to them both, they have part-time jobs in order to try to pay their own way.

It's all too obvious how much we do for our kids – and the evidence could be seen during last week's half-term break.

As my boys are now that bit older, it had slipped my mind that it was the first school holiday of the academic year, until I'd boarded my regular London-bound train to discover an unusually packed carriage.

My normally quiet commute was crowded with the excited sounds of families on a day out to the capital.

From the lone dad struggling with his chattering youngsters, on their way to the Science Museum (after his third phone call to mum at work checking what they could eat and drink), to the aunt who proudly placed her little nephew on her knee, only to discover he instantly needed the loo, I was immediately spun back to similar out-

ings with our boys.

Science, Natural History and Imperial War Museums, London Dungeon, Madame Tussaud's – you name it, we visited it.

After one exhausting day at the London Aquarium, we were heading home on the train, where sat opposite us in the busy carriage was a rather large lady who was attempting to mind her own business.

That was until our youngest told me in a loud stage whisper that he knew her name.

"Really Mikey?" I asked – quickly exchanging glances with the woman – both thinking we'd never seen each other before.

"Yes," he replied. "She's Dorothy Perkins," proudly pointing at the label on her jacket – similar to those I'd sewn into his school uniform.

At this point 'Dorothy' and I shared a smile over the cute little boy showing off his reading skills. If only he'd left it there.

"And I know how old she is," announced the five-year-old. "Look," he informed the entire train, "it says it on her coat – she's 20!"

I can only apologise to Dotty P on behalf of my son. I fully understand that a lady doesn't necessarily want her dress size announced so publicly, but my then little man wasn't aware of his social faux-pas.



BARGAIN: Experts calculate raising a child costs £270,000 – but what price unconditional love?

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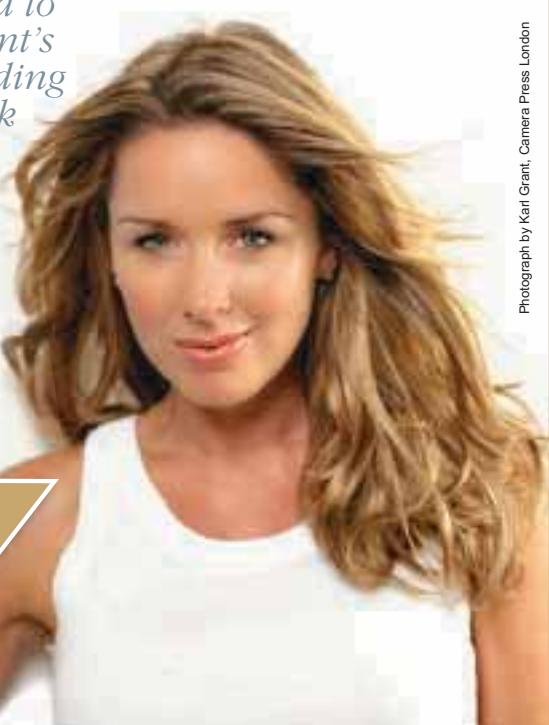
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'It was the greatest day of my life, I just saw my Queen'

By FLORENCE TENNENT

editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

THE Queen paid a royal visit to the County Town this week to meet the first regiment named in her honour in more than 20 years.

Her Majesty observed the 5,000th recruit to the Queen's Gurkha Engineers swear allegiance and commissioned three late entry officers before meeting some of the regiment's injured soldiers and their families during her visit on Thursday.

Despite a momentary threat of rain, the sky cleared, and the 300 men of the 36 Engineers formed up on the parade square in front of about 1,000 family members and guests.

Shortly after 11am the crowd rose as the Queen arrived, accompanied by her equerry Major Dan Rex, himself a Queen's Gurkha Engineer, and heralded by the Gurkhas' and Royal Engineers' bands.

She was met by Allan Willett, the Lord Lieutenant of Kent, and stood on a dais for the national anthem, before inspecting recruits.

Sapper Bal Budha Magar, 19, enlisted with the Gurkhas on December 10, 2010, and is studying military engineering in Brompton.

Mr Magar graduated top of his class in combat engineering and is the 5,000th recruit to join the Engineers.

Sworn in

He stood first in line to be greeted by the Queen before the 18 recently-trained recruits placed their hands on the British flag and were sworn in to the Gurkhas in Nepalese, before her Majesty.

Mr Magar said: "I feel very proud to take the oath in front of the Queen. I'm very happy."

"I want to continue the history of the Gurkhas that my ancestors began."

After the attestation, the Queen commissioned three late entry officers, who have already served as soldiers in the Army, by touching the hilts of their partially-drawn swords. Captains Gurung, Dirgha and Limbu will now train at Sandhurst military academy.

Her Royal Highness was introduced to the chief royal engineer, Sir Peter Wall, and the colonel of the Queen's Gurkha Engineers, Sir David Bill, before greeting Maidstone mayor Eric Hotson, MP Helen Grant and Kent Chief Constable Ian Learmonth. She then reviewed a display of the regiment's work.

Santosh Goley, 24, has served with the Gurkhas as a bricklayer and concreter for five years and was thrilled to meet the Queen.

Mr Goley said: "It is the greatest day of my life, I just saw my Queen. I'll definitely call home to tell them. She asked me if I built this



Pictures: RGM/PAUL JERRETT

wall and I said of course, that's what I do. She said it was very impressive and I thanked her."

Her Majesty joined the Gurkhas and their families for lunch and was presented with a Nepalese garland before signing the visitors' book and departing for Buckingham Palace.

Major Chris Warhurst, second in command, said: "It was nerve-wracking, but luckily the professional soldier in me came through. We've been practicing in the rain for the past two weeks, so I'm glad it's all come together."

"It's a significant honour and I'm exceptionally proud of every man and woman who took part. What a fantastic opportunity."

The Queen's visit to the barracks coincided with a change in role for the regiment, from general support to the Army's premier advanced search regiment. They will spend the next five years working in search and bomb disposal roles in Afghanistan and the UK during the 2012 Olympic Games.

The Gurkha Engineers have served in every British combat since their formation in 1948 and moved to the Maidstone barracks in 1994.



ROYAL VISIT: Above, Santosh Goley was thrilled to meet the Queen. Left, Sapper Bal Budha Magar was the 5,000th recruit to join the Engineers, he stood first in line to meet Her Majesty.



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CHRIS BRITCHER looks at the dilemma faced by parents trying to afford a summer holiday



Come on holiday firms, give families a break!

IF THERE is anything more likely to make a family grumble on an annual basis it is surely the cost of getting away during the school holidays.

As much as various travel firms like to make out they are reducing costs during August or Easter, the fact remains it can be eye-wateringly, stomach-churningly, bank balance-devastatingly expensive.

And whatever your financial state, rich or poor, everyone deserves a holiday each year – if for no other reason than to spend some quality time together.

Yet for so many, it is increasingly becoming simply too expensive to achieve each year. It will not be news to know that the sound of family budgets being squeezed is almost as deafening as a night on the streets of Tripoli at the moment.

Few will argue with those facts. And fewer still will argue with

the fact that giving your children the best education possible is absolutely vital to them being armed with what they need to get on in life, to contribute fully to society, and to lead fulfilling lives.

Missing classes can do irreparable harm to a child's grasp of fundamental arguments or formulas – the foundations of so much of their studies, without which they may fail to grasp logic and concepts for the rest of their schooling.

However, it is at this very point two contrasting issues collide; the issue of taking your child out of school so as to take advantage of cheaper prices for a holiday.

The arguments on this are set in stone for so many. On the one side you have families, quite rightly, saying that 100 per cent increases, in some cases, for taking a holiday

in August rather than June, is reason enough why their offspring should be allowed a week or two out of class.

On the flip side you have education chiefs who point at the issues such absence can cause, and, no doubt, are only too aware how such figures of absence and poor attainment can have on their statistics when the next school league tables are produced.

Both sides have strong arguments.

Recently, a group of schools in Kent, on the Isle of Sheppey, issued a stark warning – take your kids out of school for a holiday and you'll be hit with a fine.

The battle lines are clearly drawn. There is a very real danger here that the people most punished will be those not with a fla-

grant disregard for the rules, or their children's education, but those who simply cannot afford a break with their family during the months when the prices rocket.

That the worst-off will end up finding their plight even more difficult. Of course, the counter argument is that it is precisely these children who need the education so as to allow them to break the cycle and achieve great things. But it's never as easy as that, is it?

Those with a healthy bank balance and decent jobs will still be able to afford a trip abroad. Just that rather than Egypt, they may be looking to France this year. Either way, they still get a break.

The only solution to this conundrum, surely, is for holiday firms to be ordered to reduce their prices – to prevent the annual scalping which takes place and punishes those who play by the rules.

In short, it simply isn't fair. And for another generation to learn that the hard way seems the biggest injustice of all.

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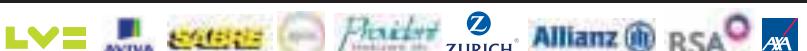
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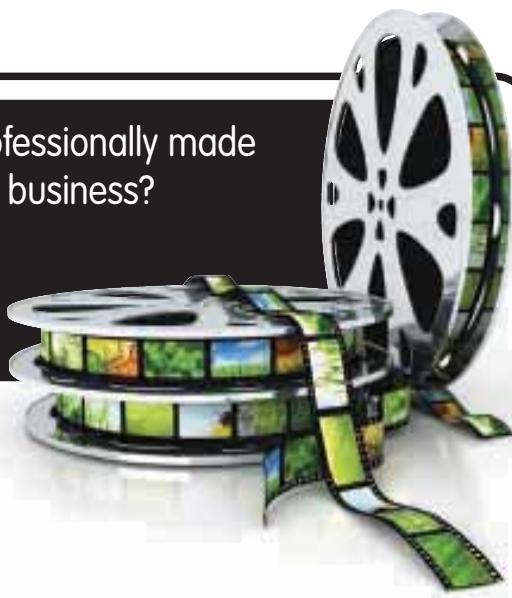
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By **STEVE KNIGHT**

steve.knight@kosmedia.co.uk

GOLDEN handshakes and redundancy payments have cost Kent County Council £3.8 million in less than a year.

The authority paid out £3.3m to just 213 ex-workers between April 1, 2010, and January 31, 2011, and will soon lose a further £538,263 with the departure of nine more senior managers.

The startling figure is not far off the £5m spent from the same budget in the previous three years combined, and serves as a warning to taxpayers ahead of an expected 1,500 job losses at KCC over the next three to four years.

"It's an incredible amount to be spending on redundancies when we should be focusing on trying to redeploy staff," said Liberal Democrat councillor Tim Prater, a member of the KCC's governance and audit committee.

"It strikes me as being a lot of money spent in less than a year and quite a percentage of the available budget. I know they're trying to reduce numbers of staff, but we've been told all the way through that most would go through natural wastage and redeployment."

"So for a year when the council has not been particularly focused on redundancies it's a fairly shocking statistic."

The £3.8m can be broken into three separate



SHOCK: Cllr Tim Prater

numbers, including £2.5m paid to 195 council workers – not including those employed in schools – in redundancy payments since last April. According to KCC, much of this reflects the implementation of proposals agreed in 2009 to restructure both the adult social services and children, families and education departments.

The council also paid £784,012 in end-of-contract payments to 18 other people, including £408,000, before tax, to former chief executive Peter Gilroy.

The final nine senior managers are all leaving as a result of the authority's ongoing restructure, which it says will eventually deliver £20m of savings.

Emma Boon, of the Taxpayers' Alliance, said: "Some redundancy payments will be unavoidable and departing staff should get what they're legally entitled to, but too many of these deals are overgenerous. Too many deals are signed behind closed doors, with taxpayers hav-

ing no say and often finding out too late. With KCC needing to find millions in savings, these expensive goodbyes must be curbed."

Last week, the council signed off its budget for the coming year, during which time it will be forced to find £95m of savings, followed by £65m in 2012/13.

Services are expected to be hit hard as a result, with the authority already confirming plans to increase social care charges, slash £2.6m funding for children's centres, and double the price of the Freedom Pass travel scheme from £50 to £100.

It must also cut the number of staff positions by up to 1,500 over the next three to four years.

Cllr Roger Gough, cabinet member for corporate support services and performance management, said the council employs about 14,000 non-school staff.

He added: "While redundancies do incur a one-off cost, they then bring recurring savings to the taxpayer year after year."

"Like any local authority or major organisation, we have funds set aside to deal with redundancy and end-of-contract payments, which are an unavoidable part of managing a workforce of this size, particularly during periods of major restructure."

"The payments in question represent less than half a per cent of our total salary budget over the last three years."

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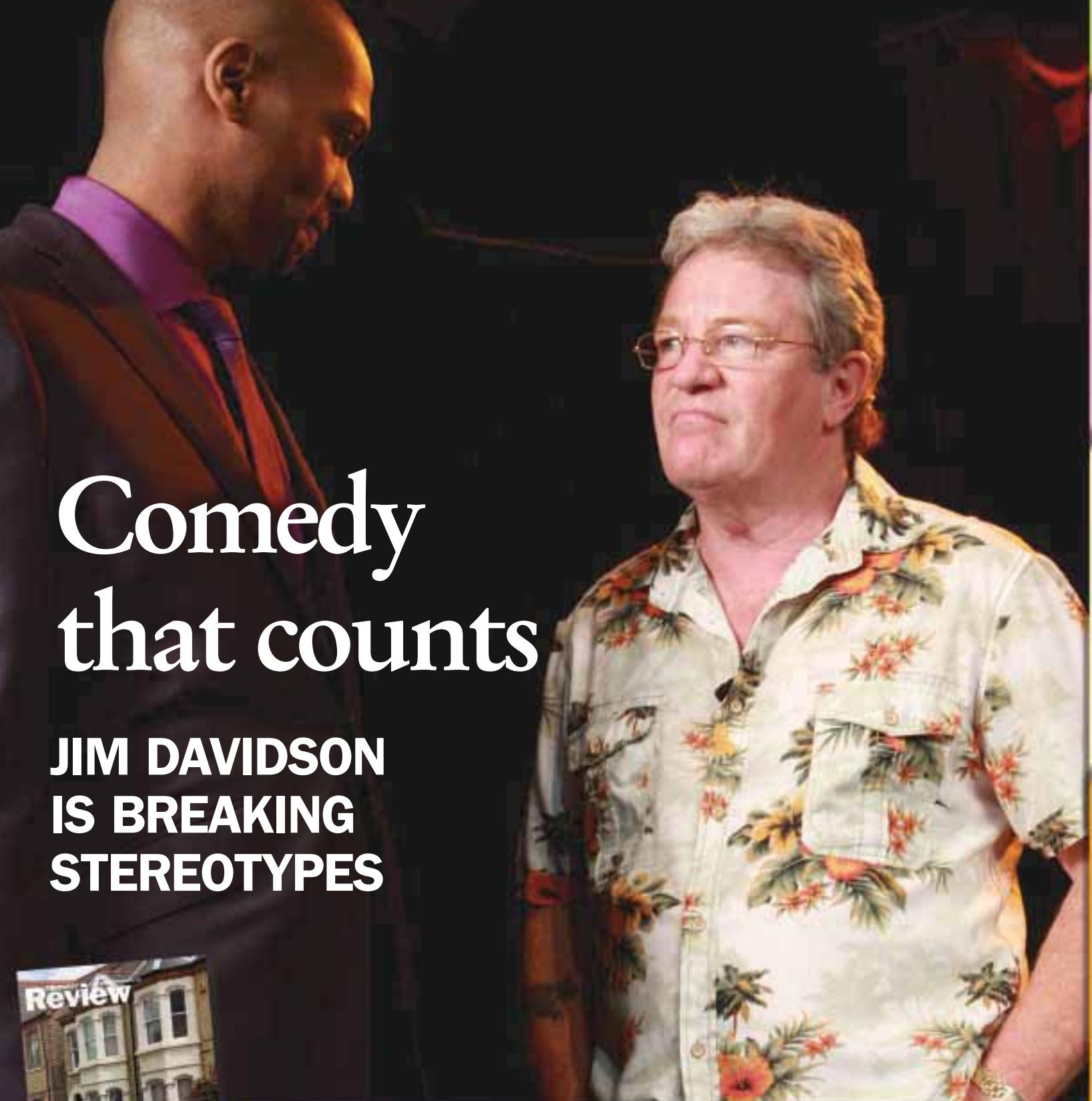
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IN MY VIEW



By Joe Bill

A new empire of mobster TV

**BOARDWALK EMPIRE, SKY ATLANTIC
10PM SATURDAY**

I CAN'T remember the last time a product that was so hugely advertised and anticipated actually lived up to its hype... until now.

Sky TV's newest channel, Sky Atlantic, has been kick-started with three or four Sopranos-esque dramas, but the most talked about has to be Boardwalk Empire.

The show stars award-winning actor Steve Buscemi as Nucky Thompson, the crooked chanceller of a 1920s Atlantic City in New Jersey.

The scene is set as prohibition laws have been passed in the country, but Thompson is not prepared to allow that to have an impact on his fun and lavish lifestyle in the city.

In fact, he decides that he – alongside his brother, who happens to be head of the local police – will make sure that Atlantic City is far from alcohol-free.

Thompson uses his wealth and power to rope in a number of politicians, gangs and traders to make sure the booze continues to flow.

With a similar flavour to The Sopranos, we see the lives of a number of people played out individually and then discover how they are linked back to Thompson. This isn't surprising as the show's creator, Terence Winter, was producer of the mobster drama.

Buscemi, who appeared in one series of The Sopranos, has created a loveable yet despicable character bent on retaining his top spot. He fits the role perfectly, banishing any memories of being known as Mr Bit-Part-Role.

His superb acting is complemented by that of Brit Stephen Graham (This Is England), who plays a young Al Capone looking to move up in the world.

The first episode was directed by Martin Scorsese and is now known to be the most expensive pilot episode in television history. But it was worth it.

The stage is set and the strands of storyline have been intertwined like a violent, money-grabbing jigsaw, waiting to be completed.

It remains to be seen whether the first couple of episodes are a benchmark for the series as a whole, but all I can say is that it could not have begun any better.

I am hooked already. Unlike another American series, Lost, questions within the show are raised in every episode but then answered swiftly, avoiding any frustration to viewers.

The tension and mystery is handled superbly, not to the point of revealing all, but there is certainly nowhere near the sense of confusion that Lost inflicted on its viewers.

I cannot speak highly enough of Boardwalk Empire. The acting is good, the costumes are good, the casting is excellent and the storyline impeccable. For those of you who have been unfortunate enough to have missed the first couple of episodes, do not fear. It is being repeated almost daily on Sky Atlantic.

And as Nucky Thompson would say: "You can expect to have everything."

CINEMA

I AM NUMBER FOUR (12A)

DIRECTOR DJ Caruso (*Eagle Eye*, *Disturbia*) provides the requisite slam-bang thrills in this adaptation of Pittacus Lore's novel, the first instalment of a proposed six-book series.

To a cynical eye, *I Am Number Four* has been constructed purely with box-office receipts in mind, mimicking the forbidden love and adventure of the *Twilight* films, albeit with Earthbound aliens replacing the vampires and werewolves.

The script follows the template of *Spider-Man* by creating a conflicted hero who realises over the course of this opening salvo that his powers must be harnessed for good.

It certainly doesn't hurt that leading man Alex Pettyfer looks good with his shirt off, to draw in the teenage girls.

However, it may hurt the prospects of a franchise that he can't match the gym-toned physique with a similarly robust emotional performance and, unlike Robert Pattinson, he can't blame lifelessness in front of the camera on his character being a member of the blood-sucking undead.

The film opens with a night-time chase through a jungle in Kenya, culminating in the grisly demise of a boy.

"Number Three is dead," gasps 15-year-old John Smith (Alex Pettyfer), who lives hundreds of miles away with his guardian Henri (Timothy Olyphant).

John looks like any other high-school student, but he is really an alien from the doomed planet Lorien, hiding on Earth from a destructive rival race, the Mogadorians.

These aggressive hunters intend to kill the Lorien refugees in a specific order, and since John is Number Four, he is next on their hit-list. When they finally catch up with John and Henri, the pair escape to the quaint town of Paradise, Ohio, where John befriends students Sam Goode (Callan McAuliffe) and Sarah Hart (Dianna Agron), making an enemy of her ex-boyfriend Mark (Jake Abel).

I Am Number Four maintains a brisk pace with regular set-pieces, peppered with digital trickery and a smattering of bloodshed to justify the 12A certificate.

McAuliffe acts his co-stars off the screen as the sidekick who laments "My entire childhood has been an episode of *X-Files*".

Pettyfer copes with the physical rigours of his role and makes an attractive pairing with Agron, who couldn't be more adorably cute if she tried.

Plot strands such as the whereabouts of Sam's father are left hanging as teasers for future films, and the climactic showdown neatly sets up intrigues and a potential love triangle involving a mysterious female assassin (Teresa Palmer) in the next chapter, *The Power Of Six* – a fair rating for a capable if disappointingly lightweight introduction to the Lorien universe.

NO STRINGS ATTACHED (15)

THAT crazy little thing called love complicates a seemingly perfect relationship based on sex in Ivan Reitman's contemporary comedy of social mores.

As the title suggests, *No Strings Attached* centres on a pair of 20-something professionals who don't have time in their busy schedules for the inconvenience of commitment.

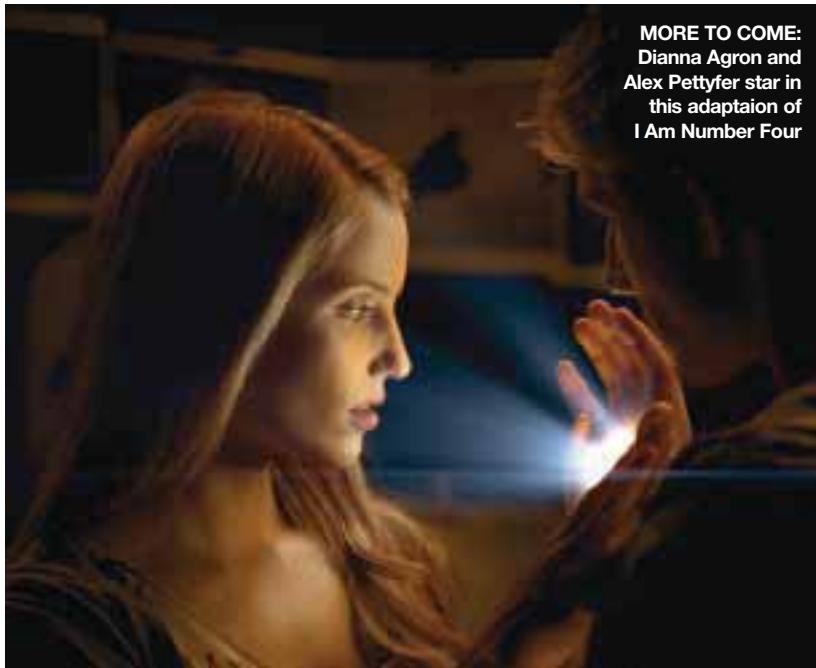
And so they agree to be friends with benefits, calling and texting each other for physical gratification with the understanding that they don't have to worry about the awkwardness of post-coital conversation or sneaking out before breakfast.

As Harry and Sally discovered, when they met more than 20 years ago, men and women cannot be friends without emotions getting in the way.

Thus screenwriter Elizabeth Meriwether gradually shows her protagonists the errors of their lustful ways and sets up the possibility of a happy-ever-after using that age-old plot device: a family wedding.

In the wrong hands, *No Strings Attached* would be saccharine nonsense.

Thankfully, this film is blessed with direc-



MORE TO COME:
Dianna Agron and
Alex Pettyfer star in
this adaption of
I Am Number Four

tor Ivan Reitman and well-judged performances from Natalie Portman and Ashton Kutcher, who generate smouldering on-screen chemistry.

Adam (Kutcher), whose father Alvin is a famous actor, works as a lowly TV producer on a show that is cynically jumping on the High School Musical bandwagon.

After disastrous previous encounters, Adam stumbles back into the life of medical student Emma (Portman), who once told him "People aren't meant to be together", and so they agree to no-strings-attached sex.

Adam's friends Eli and Wallace are envious that their buddy has found the perfect woman. Meanwhile, Emma's housemates diagnose imminent heartbreak.

No Strings Attached is the first touchingly sweet and uproariously funny Hollywood rom-com of the year.

The couple's comic timing is impeccable but, more crucially, they both allow the characters to wear their hearts on their sleeves, shedding tears as they face the possibility of losing each other forever.

DRIVE ANGRY 3D (18)

HELL hath no fury like a father scorned in Patrick Lussier's outlandish revenge thriller, which was shot in 3D to add depth to the overblown action sequences.

Lussier and co-writer Todd Farmer don't have any patience for realism or subtlety, not when they can defy the laws of physics to

contrive an explosive set-piece that will rattle the fillings in viewers' heads.

Drive Angry is a 104-minute thrill ride which keeps the adrenaline pumping with a volatile cocktail of gun fights, sex, car chases and foul-mouthed one-liners.

Milton (Cage) is condemned to purgatory, from where he must watch in agony as his beloved daughter falls into the clutches of demonic cult-leader Jonah King (Billy Burke), and is murdered for her baby girl.

Jonah intends to use the infant as a sacrifice to raise Satan's army.

Milton heads for a diner, where he flirts with sex-starved waitress Norma Jean and then thumbs a lift with her colleague, Piper (Amber Heard), who is trapped in an abusive relationship. He helps to rescue the young woman from the beatings and she joins him on a quest to track down Jonah King and rescue the innocent infant.

Meanwhile, the Devil dispatches one of his minions, The Accountant (William Fichtner), to hunt down Milton and return him to the inferno.

Drive Angry 3D is a hoot, as long as you downshift your brain into neutral and submit to the endless barrage of obscenities and gratuitous violence.

The plot is as messy as some of the set-pieces and there's very little acting involved for Oscar-winner Cage, but he seems to be having a blast as everything explodes around him in 3D.

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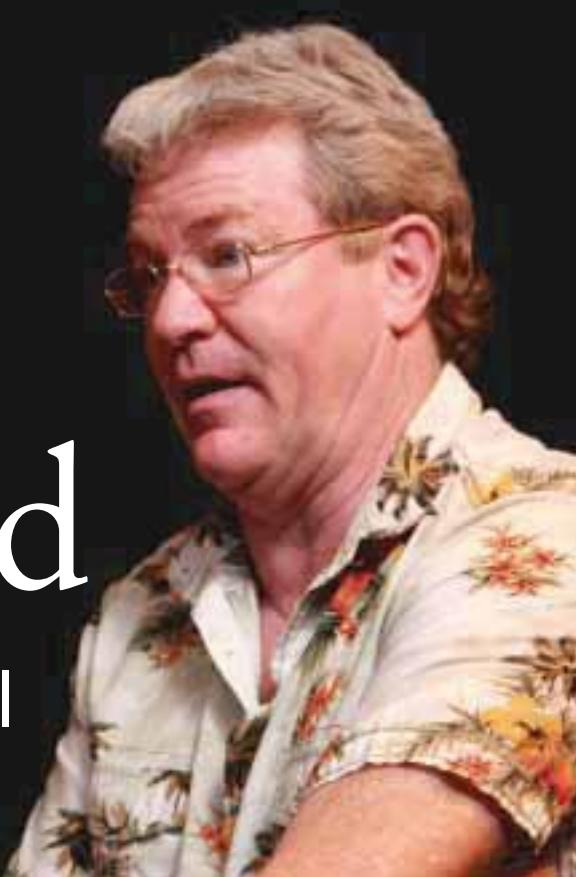
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Comic wants to stand up and be counted

Boredom has been inspirational for funny man Jim Davidson



Review

BY ED HILL

JIM Davidson has been described as many things over the years – comic, game-show host, tabloid love-rat – but playwright is not one that springs to mind.

However, his new play *Stand Up And Be Counted* will have its national Press night at The Orchard theatre in Dartford next month.

Davidson turned to writing while in self-imposed tax exile in Dubai.

He said: "I lived there for four years and started to write because there was little else to do. While I was there I wrote three plays, a cookery book, a novel and a TV series. That's boredom for you."

When he wrote his new work on a subject close to his heart, he didn't expect he would act in it as well.

He said: "I hadn't done this sort of serious acting before. I thought someone like Bradley Walsh might be able to play Eddie Pierce, the part I play, but by the time I was going to send it to him, my manager and other people said I should do it.

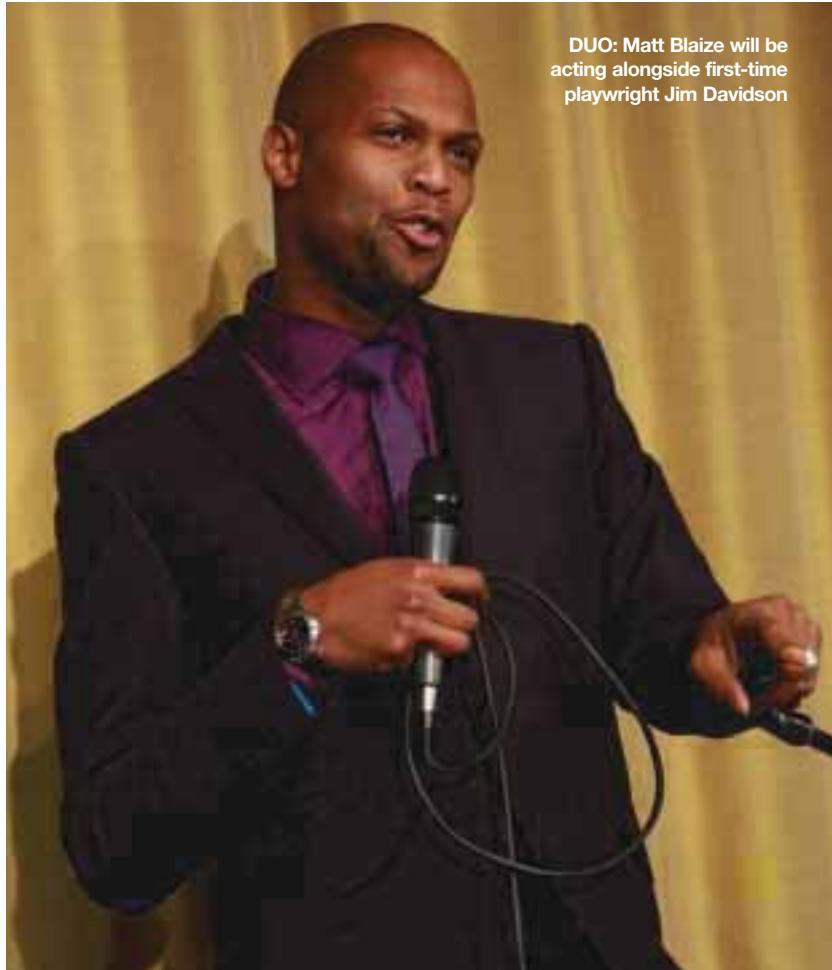
"I thought people don't want to see me acting, but they assured me it would be great."

The play tracks the explosive events that erupt when performers from opposite ends of the comedy world clash. The characters lock horns in a dingy dressing room at a charity fund-raiser.

Eddie Pierce is an old-school comic who collides with his nemesis, a hot young stand-up named Earl T Richards, played by real-life comic Matt Blaize. The central struggle is surrounded by other characters such as Eddie's wife Suzie; Billy Simpson, a successful gay TV comic; and Ellie Jayne, an aspiring star discovered on a TV talent show.

Davidson knows people will obviously see the similarity between Eddie and his own reputation for near-the-knuckle material that often riles the politically-correct brigade.

He said: "People say all sorts of things about me. He's racist, he's homophobic,



DUO: Matt Blaize will be acting alongside first-time playwright Jim Davidson

of laughs. Although we have to tell a dramatic story, I insisted with everyone who was in the show that it had to be funny. It is not Shakespeare. It's a funny play that I hope people will love," he said.

Davidson's co-star, Matt Blaize, first met the comic at a gig in Southend. The meeting was the inspiration for *Stand Up And Be Counted*.

He said: "When we first met, I told him that I didn't like what he represented, and he wanted to know why. I said that the morning after he did jokes about Chalky White on TV during the 1970s, I was tormented in the playground.

"To his eternal credit, Jim took it all in. He was highly complimentary about my act and he asked me to support him at some big gigs."

The two comics are now friends and Blaize was the obvious choice to play Earl.

He said: "I read the play and some of Eddie's dialogue comes from that night we first met. I was very happy. I wasn't having a go at him that night. I just wanted him to hear my side of the story. If someone is then open enough to use that in a positive way, then it's nothing but a good thing."

Davidson hopes this will be the first of many plays he produces. He has done many rewrites, and changes are still being made during the rehearsal process.

He said: "I have written 10 versions of it and in rehearsals we are still working on it all the time, but by the time it gets to Dartford it will be well polished."

The world of comedy has changed radically since Davidson began in the frilly shirts and velvet suits of the 1970s.

It was shaken-up by the punk-inspired alternative movement of the 80s and 90s and has grown to be a new commercial industry in its own right.

Davidson is honest about why he first wanted to make people laugh:

"When I got into showbusiness, it was just a desire to be famous and attract better-looking women. I wasn't bothered about how funny I was. I couldn't sing or play the guitar, so comedy was the quickest way to success. Now there are thousands of comedians in the country."

• *Stand Up And Be Counted* will be at The Orchard, Dartford, from Monday, February 28, until Saturday, March 5. To book tickets, phone the box office on 01322 220000 or alternatively visit www.orchardtheatre.co.uk.

he's sexist, but they have often never seen me.

"I get accused of being old-school and to an extent I am, but there's a lot in this play that explores how people's perceptions of each other prejudices their ability to get on."

And 57-year-old Davidson is keen to point out that Eddie Pierce is far more extreme than

he is: "This character isn't me. He is a really horrible bloke, an extreme version of me with Bernard Manning thrown in for good measure, but he does get his comeuppance."

First and foremost, the writer says he wanted the production to be entertaining.

"The main thing is that the play has tonnes

ATTRACTI0NS



You can become the art

TWO special events are being organised to coincide with the opening of the Turner Contemporary Gallery in Margate.

The landmark building is due to open in April and the new directors want to get local people involved in the You Are Here programme, a 10-day series of activities running from Saturday to Monday, April 16-25.

One of the events is The Big Sing. Internationally-renowned composer Orlando Gough and music director Tony Castro want singers to perform a range of modern music in a live performance at the gallery on Sunday, April 23. To take part and for full details, email Heather Sawney, arts develop-

ment officer at Thanet council, at heather.sawney@thanet.gov.uk or phone her on 01843 577428.

Bodies In Urban Spaces, left, takes place on Saturday and Sunday, April 16-17, and is a chance for people to take part in what is described as "a series of physical interventions in Margate".

Working closely with Austrian choreographer Willie Dorner and his dancers, you can become part of the buildings in Margate.

To find out more, contact Sepake Angiama, curator of public programmes by emailing sangiama@turnercontemporary.org or phoning 01843 233000.

Look into hypnotic ears

GERMAN hypnotist Hannibal Helmutro will be entertaining audiences in Margate.

The performer, who has toured for many years as part of the Circus of Horrors, has an added twist to putting people under. He gets them to look at his ears rather than his eyes.

The 39-year-old, who has extended earlobes, has made ear-rings with rotating discs to mesmerise his volunteers.

He said: "People are fascinated by the ears, so getting people to

look at them is never a problem. I find it easier to hypnotise people with my ears than my eyes."

Hannibal first learnt the art of hypnotism to help with his other act, sword-swallowing.

Using hypnotism helps to reduce the gagging reflex that human beings have when swallowing a sword.

Hannibal Helmutro will be at Margate Winter Gardens on Saturday, March 12, at 7.30pm.

For details and to book, visit www.margatewintergardens.co.uk.



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BY GEORGE

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FEMALE 25, professional, likes nights out, socialising, seeks male. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **360961**

FUN loving country girl, 48, seeks male for friendship/relationship. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **384488**

FEMALE seeks N/S, clean, tidy white male, 42-50 for friendship. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **361049**

A rare diamond, bright, sparkly and good quality, let me put the sparkle back into your life. Wanted professional, attractive male, 38-58, medium build, 5ft 6ins. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **361005**

SFT 4ins, slim, medium build, long hair, blue eyes, likes keep fit, animals, seeks male. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **384482**

SUE 59, divided, likes walks, cinema, meals out, antiques, seeks genuine, faithful guy for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **360923**

SUZANNE 35, beautiful blonde, seeks discreet male for chats and a relaxing glass of wine anytime. ACA, status unimportant. City area. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **342527**

ELIZABETH caring, honest, reliable, likes most things, seeks older gentle, late 70's for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **359589**

PRETTY woman, slim, black widow, 39, energetic, seeks white, solvent male for LTR. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **360695**

MAIL/GUARDIAN reader? Arty, vivacious female, 61, happy in own skin, seeks N/S sociable, warm, loving man. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **360655**

LADY slim, brunette, N/S, likes music, National Trust, theatre, days out, seeks sincere, honest gent, 48-60 for friendship, maybe more. Kent/Sussex. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **360633**

TINKERBELL seeks Peter Pan, I'm 36, 5ft 3ins, size 8-10 and am looking for a tall strong man who can connect and make me laugh. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **356981**

WARM well educated 60's female, seeks similar gent to enjoy the simple things of life. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **360477**

BETH young minded widow, 65, 5ft 5ins, happy size 14, N/S, many interests, seeks sincere, honest gent for friendship who might admit to some aching bones. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **344291**

SAM 37, attractive, size 16, friendly, bubbly, seeks sincere, genuine male, 35-50. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **384334**

ATTRACTIVE lady, seeks kind, solvent male for romance and possibly love. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **360159**

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PATRICIA outgoing, confident, feminine, warm, friendly, smart, good company, attractive, seeks similar male. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **347215**

FEMALE seeks N/S, clean, tidy white male, 42-50 for friendship. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **361049**

CARING young 62 petite blonde, seeks someone to share doing things with, theatre, dancing and perhaps nights in. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **359761**

57YR old voluptuous lady, works, divorced, likes beach, meals out, theatre, travel, weekends away, seeks white male, 56-61 with GSOH for LTR. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **384425**

HONEST caring, genuine female, 44, GSOH, likes meals out, nights in, seeks similar male. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **381844**

49YR old lady, honest, sincere, easygoing, likes a laugh, looking for love. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **359059**

ATTRACTIVE caring, interesting black lady, seeks educated, genuine, white male for LTR. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **356937**

ELEGANT professional, black, lady, 5ft 3ins, medium build, likes dancing, meals out, cinema, reading, seeks intelligent, professional guy for relationship. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **356840**

PETITE female, slim, attractive, blonde hair, green eyes, GSOH, romantic, likes sports, nights out, meals, seeks honest, genuine, N/S male. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **334613**

SOUTH London Lady, full figure with long hair, curves in all the right places. WLTM male of any age for fun, friendship and more. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **356989**

FUN loving student, 21yrs, seeks male of any age for fun in London, can travel and accommodate, I love a risk and having fun Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **356981**

FOREIGN beauty, long, long hair, 20's yrs, seeks older male who can spoil. Someone like me. London area. Discretion assured. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **356967**

CUDDLY curvy size 14 plus female looking for very assertive gent, 59-65 for daytime adult fun. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **356729**

CARING genuine single mum seeks male for LTR. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **356719**

BEDFORDSHIRE female, 39, HIV positive, likes cinema, music, travel, nights in, wine bars, seeks decent, white, professional male, under 45. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **356579**

5FT 2ins female, dark hair, medium build, late 40's, GSOH, likes cinema, walks, family life, seeks male for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **350381**

OUTGOING sincere 5ft 6ins lady WLTM tall, caring interesting male 70's to share life's adventure. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **357959**

FEMININE lady who knows how to treat her man seeks strong minded male to care for, any area London/Surrey/Kent Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **356985**

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CAROLE petite, slim, long blonde hair, green eyes, attractive, likes sports, nights out, pub, meals out, cinema, theatre, music, seeks genuine, honest male for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **348941**

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52YR old female, likes walks, animals, theatre, cinema, seeks male for companionship/LTR. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **357291**

LATE 20's female, seeking older male. Call to hear exactly what I'm like and looking for. I can meet anywhere in London at any time Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **356995**

TALL slim brunette, just 21yrs seeks interesting older male who knows what's what, show me the ways of the world. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **383860**

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WOULD a youngish lady consider friendship with white, kind, generous, active, elderly gent. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **361195**

BRIAN 48, 5ft 9ins, medium build, told attractive, easygoing, likes pub, meals out, cinema, seeks attractive white female, 35-48 for LTR. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **347569**

MID 50's male, easygoing, understanding, likes normal things, seeks female to share life with. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **323297**

BLOND male, 47, PA/secretary, easygoing, likes fashion, shopping, dancing, travel, seeks similar smart female who loves to chat and dance. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **361011**

JASON likes travel, nights in/out, seeks female for fun times. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **356193**

ATTRACTIVE lady, curvy and fun, looking for an uncomplicated but only discreet relationship, work etc, any area, London. Discretion assured and expected please Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **356991**

HEDONISTIC curvy, vivacious female sought by successful, tall, young 51y old guy to pamper and spoil. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **384264**

BABE seeks mature white male for discreet fun, you won't be sorry I know how to treat my man. Any area London Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **356997**

ANDREW attractive, tanned, young, 48, N/S, ex BA crew 747/concorde, fitness training instructor, mountain medic, GSOH, widowed, no kids/bags, seeks anyone anywhere, genuine. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **360965**

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For message collection just call **0906 515 7112**

64YR old female, 5ft 2ins, GSOH, likes golf, seeks male with GSOH for friendship, days out, maybe more. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **339581**

LONELY female, petite, attractive, size 10-12, blue eyes, long hair, likes historic places, holidays, meals out, seeks honest, genuine male for friendship initially. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **356359**

CRYSTAL 5ft 6ins, long dark hair, hazel eyes, olive skin, seeks male for friendship, days out, maybe more. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **334393**

SEALED with a kiss. 37y old single mum, blonde hair, blue eyes, curly, likes sunshine, travel, looking for Knight in shining armour, to make me laugh and spoil me. Folkestone. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **355543**

LADY 44, GSOH, short, curly hair, seeks good guy for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **355391**

DEBBIE mid 50's, attractive, likes dancing, music, cinema, theatre, seeks male for companionship. Maidstone. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **351419**

ATTRACTION fun, friendly blonde, seeks fun guy. Sutton. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **382502**

BEAUTIFUL slim, babe, 22, seeks older, generous guy 65 plus who knows how to pamper. London. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **348545**

ATTRACTIVE outgoing 64y old lady, seeks genuine, retired, solvent, professional male for friendship. Kent. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **351929**

LADY 55, 6ft 7ins guy, likes cinema, walks, home life, seeks prettiness, petite, slim, 40-10ins-5ft 2ins female for honest, loving LTR. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **359857**

TONY 51, hardworking, GSOH, young at heart, seeks female, 35-50 for fun, excitement and maybe more. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **358761**

BLACK male, 43, kind, caring, easygoing, seeks white female, 60-63 for lasting relationship. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **360919**

TALL slim, fit, N/S 52y old guy, seeks like-minded female for no strings attached fun. Discretion assured and expected. London. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **384428**

PROFESSIONAL male, 58, honest, reliable, fun, likes sports, travel, seeks attractive female for possible LTR. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **360777**

MEDITERRANEAN male, 45, well off, seeks nice female, 20-40 for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **347569**

MALE seeks female, 20-40 for private relationship. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **360707**

KEITH 57, tall, likes paranormal, Star Trek, seeks kind, honest loyal female. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **360491**

I'M Smart, looking for someone to take my heart, gentleman 59, seeking N/S genuine lady for good conversation and romantic dates. Leading to long term relationship. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **360545**

MALE seeks sincere, loyal female, 40-55 to share life together. That's all I need. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **360417**

59YR old male, 5ft 8ins, medium build, smoker, GSOH, honest, down to earth, likes music, sunshine, walks, home life, holidays, days out, seeks female for LTR. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **359843**

MALE 57, own home, works full time, seeks lady 45-62 for companionship. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **360723**

mydate24



RICHARD 46, dark hair, 5ft 6ins, medium build, caring, loving, likes walks, cinema, meals out, DVDs, music, seeks female, 38-57 for loving relationship. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **359801**

GOOD looking straight male, 52, likes CD, seeks understanding lady, any age for fun times. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **384436**

FUN loving male, 42, professional, OHAC, likes good things in life, seeks warm, sincere female for naughty fun. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **384356**

WILLIAM young 65, fit, active, N/S, non drinker, seeks Christian female who enjoys the simple things in life. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **350833**

KEV 47, 6ft 1ins, dark hair, brown eyes, seeks attractive, loving, loyal female. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **358761**

TONY 51, hardworking, GSOH, young at heart, seeks female, 35-50 for fun, excitement and maybe more. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **359857**

VERY handsome black male, tall, athletic, seeks female of any age for fun, friendship and relationship. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **357445**

DAVE 45, 5ft 11ins, slim, medium build, seeks loving, caring, kind black lady for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **382634**

PAKISTAN male 50, 6ft, medium build, seeks loving, caring, kind black lady, 50-55. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **357711**

ADAM charming 44, seeks slim, good looking, adventurous lady for daytime fun and frolics. Discretion assured. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **384222**

YOUNG 60y old male, medium build, 5ft 6ins, easygoing, GSOH, seeking N/S, likes films, music, sports, holidays, seeks sophisticated lady for loving relationship. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **360095**

DEREK 46, kind, loving, seeks lady to love. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **384138**

JAMES 37, genuine, GSOH, many interests, seeks sincere bubbly female with GSOH for friendship and more. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **360099**

YOUNG looking 61, 5ft 10ins, slim, modest, blue eyes, reliable, likes music and a loyal woman. Medway. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **359843**

DAVID 62, 5ft 6ins, medium build, easygoing, GSOH, sensitive, romantic, kind, N/S, seeks female for chats. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **360381**

DANNY 46, workaholic, seeks female for fun times, maybe more. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **360085**

6FT 3ins male, honest, genuine, seeks like-minded queen, any age/looks. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **383796**

YOUNG 40's male, free spirited, no ties, seeks girl who wants to have fun. Tel No: **0906 515 7112** Box No: **3600**

Cosy up for some great food

RESTAURANT REVIEW

BY STEVE KNIGHT

WHEN a pub contains 'Ye olde' in its name, it doesn't always mean it was built hundreds of years ago.

But in the case of Ye Olde Yew Tree Inn, in the village of Westbere, near Canterbury, there can be no mistaking the fact that this cosy little hostelry really is pretty ancient.

Claiming to be the oldest pub in Kent, the Yew Tree was built in 1348 and lists Queen Anne and the Archbishop of Canterbury – of which there have been 52 since its opening – among the many dignitaries to have rented a room there over the centuries.

Even the 18th-century highwayman Dick Turpin is said to have visited the establishment, albeit only until being forced to leap from a window to evade the law.

The Yew Tree was also used as a hospital to treat wounded soldiers during the English Civil War and is said to be home to two ghosts, but thankfully they did not reveal themselves when my partner and I visited for a meal on Valentine's Day.

Inside, the pub is heavily beamed – as you would expect from such an old building – and boasts a large inglenook fireplace that provides a cosy environment in winter.

To my mind, the place could probably do with a makeover, as the interior does not look like it has been touched in years.

The kitchen staff laid on a special à la carte menu for Valentine's Day, but there was still more than enough variety to satisfy even the fussiest of eaters (ie me).

For my starter, I chose chicken liver pâté



with a tomato and chilli relish (£4.95), which was delicious. I was also pleasantly surprised that, for once, a restaurant was able to provide enough bread to spread the stuff on to. My partner opted for the trio of smoked

and cured salmon with potato and caper salad (£5.50), which she enjoyed.

The speed with which our starters arrived made it all the more disappointing when we had to wait a considerable length of time for our main course, although our friendly waitress had told us this would be the case and so we were more accepting of the delay.

It was worth the wait, though, as my partner and I both agreed that our Gressingham duck breast with potato gratin, green beans, braised red cabbage and a port reduction gravy (£13.95) was one of the best meals we'd had.

The duck was cooked to perfection and the potato gratin in particular was mouth-watering.

The gravy was a little too strong for my liking, but my partner felt it only added to the enjoyment of the dish.

My dessert of warm chocolate cake with ice-cream (£3.95) topped off what had been a splendid meal.

While the Yew Tree may be off the beaten track, it's certainly worth a visit – if not for the excellent food, then at least to say you've been inside Kent's oldest pub.

And now that Valentine's Day has passed, you probably won't have to put up with the stroking and caressing that went on at the next table, where a couple sat next to each other during their meal instead of opposite.

I was begging for the waitress to 'accidentally' spill soup all over them, but unfortunately they were far too professional for that...

- Total bill: £58.15
- Ye Olde Yew Tree Inn, 32 Westbere Lane, Westbere, Canterbury CT2 0HH
- Telephone: 01227 710501
- www.yewtreewestbere.co.uk
- Review visits and pays for meals anonymously

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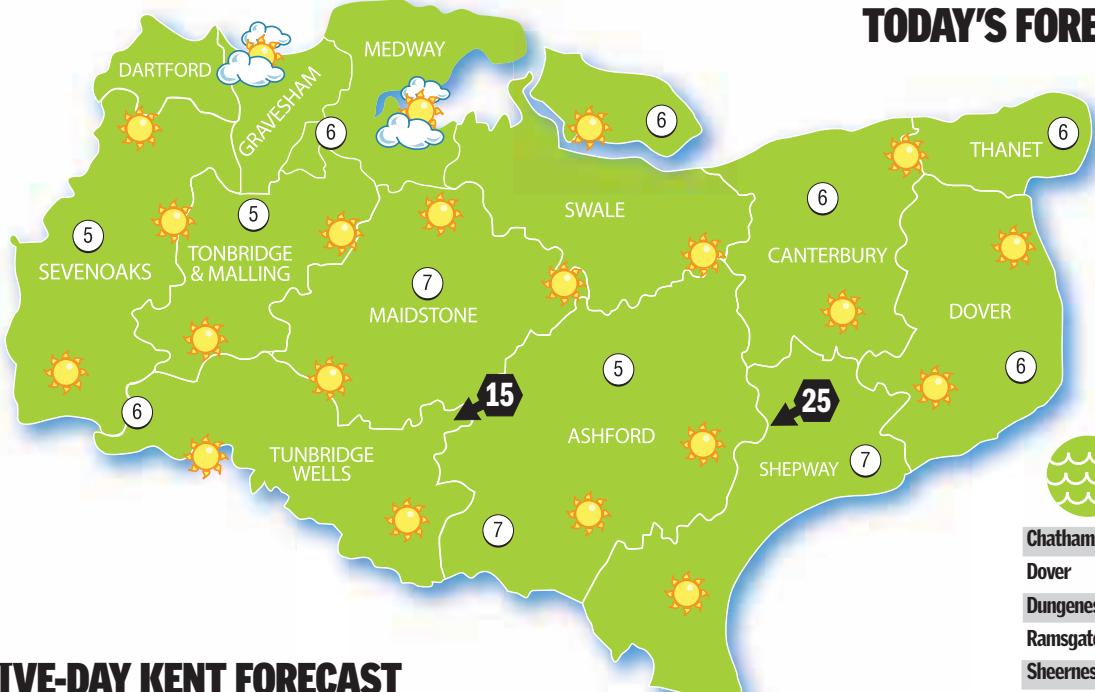
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TODAY'S FORECAST



AROUND THE WORLD YESTERDAY

Amsterdam	3°C	Madrid	9°C
Athens	9°C	New York	7°C
Barcelona	11°C	Paris	5°C
Beijing	4°C	Rome	12°C
Bombay	34°C	Sydney	25°C
Cape Town	32°C	Tenerife	22°C
Cardiff	6°C	Tokyo	4°C
Gibraltar	17°C	Vancouver	3°C
Hong Kong	24°C	Warsaw	-1°C
Las Palmas	22°C	Wellington	21°C

FIVE-DAY KENT FORECAST

	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon												
Ashford	6°C	7°C	8°C	8°C	9°C	Dover	6°C	6°C	8°C	7°C	8°C	Gravesend	6°C	7°C	8°C	8°C	9°C
Canterbury	6°C	6°C	7°C	7°C	8°C	Faversham	6°C	6°C	6°C	7°C	7°C	Maidstone	6°C	7°C	8°C	8°C	10°C
Chatham	6°C	6°C	6°C	7°C	7°C	Folkestone	6°C	6°C	8°C	7°C	8°C	Ramsgate	6°C	6°C	7°C	7°C	8°C
Dartford	6°C	7°C	8°C	8°C	9°C	Gillingham	6°C	6°C	6°C	7°C	7°C	Rochester	6°C	6°C	6°C	7°C	7°C

KENT'S WEEKEND HIGH TIDES

Chatham	Saturday	1:21pm 5.9m	Sunday	1:50pm 5.9m
Dover	Saturday	11:31am 6.4m	Sunday	12:02pm 6.4m
Dungeness	Saturday	11:30am 7.4m	Sunday	12:01pm 7.5m
Ramsgate	Saturday	12:01pm 4.8m	Sunday	12:32pm 4.9m
Sheerness	Saturday	1:11pm 5.6m	Sunday	1:40pm 5.6m
Whitstable	Saturday	1:20pm 5.1m	Sunday	1:45pm 5.1m

SUNRISE 6.39am SUNSET 5.36pm

MOONRISE 5.25am MOONSET 3.25pm

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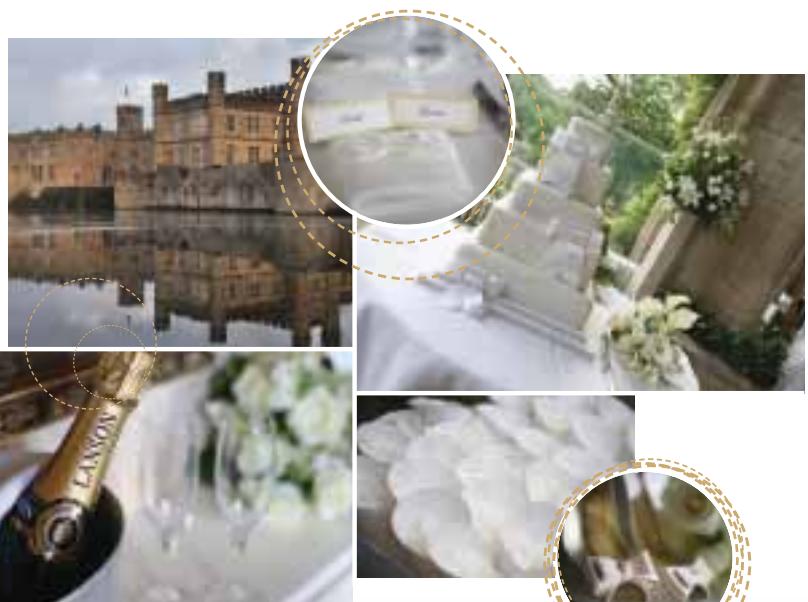
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Wander through

THE ancient city of Canterbury is a designated World Heritage Site and is also the home of the Church of England.

Thousands of years of history have taken place behind its walls – sections of which still remain – and a visit takes you on a journey from Roman times to the present array of shops, restaurants, bars and clubs.

At the heart of the city is a wealth of visitor attractions. The cathedral, St Augustine's Abbey and St Martin's Church form the Heritage Site, but there are also many other excellent attractions in the city, too, including river tours, museums and walking tours... to name just a very few.

Visitors can save money by purchasing an Attractions Passport Ticket, which gives free entry into the cathedral, abbey, The Canterbury Tales centre and one of the city's museums as well as discounts at other selected attractions.

The cathedral – scene of the murder of outspoken Archbishop Thomas Becket is one of the most spectacular churches in the world.

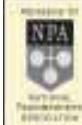
It is the mother church of the Anglican Communion and seat of the archbishop. Stunning stained-glass windows are everywhere. And the 11th-century crypt, 12th-century quire and 14th-century nave are all steeped in atmosphere.

The tomb of royal warrior The Black Prince is a centerpiece, as is the latest creation of sculptor Antony Gormley.

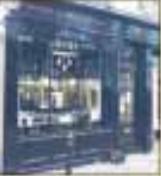
And have you ever wondered what it would be like to step back in time and experience the sights, sounds and smells of a bygone era? During a visit to The Canterbury Tales with its stunning reconstruction of 14th-century England, you can do just that.

Inside the historic building of St Margaret's Church you can step back more than 500 years to join Geoffrey Chaucer and his colourful characters on their pilgrimage from London to the Becket's shrine.

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You can take in the ruins of a Norman castle keep and castle walls and one of the three original royal castles in Kent.

There are interpretation panels, a model of the castle, which dates from 1200AD, and also some superb elevated viewing areas.

The Roman Museum is underground at the level of the Roman town. It's an exciting mix of excavated real objects, authentic recon-



structions and preserved remains of a Roman town house with its famous mosaics.

Dane John Park has been restored to attractive gardens, with monuments and

memorials, a bandstand with summertime concerts, a central fountain, a tearoom and a children's maze.

Eastbridge Hospital was founded following the murder of Becket as accommodation for poor pilgrims visiting his tomb.

So, whatever your main interests, a visit to the city of Canterbury brings history alive in a way few places in Europe can match.

And as well as being a great historical city Canterbury is looking to the future.

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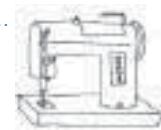
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As Is Now

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BREATHTAKING: The old town of Lyon at dusk; below is Basilica of Notre-Dame de Fourviere

Lyon's share of French culture

By **CAROLINE HENDRIE**

PAUSING to consult my map on the pavements of France's elegant second city, I found myself in excellent company.

Leaning from the windows of the building in front of me were the Lumière brothers, pioneers of the movies; Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, creator of The Little Prince; the Emperor Claudius; and, suddenly appearing at the door, Paul Bocuse, one of the world's top chefs and the only one of this gathering still alive.

This selection of Lyon's citizens was made possible by the local custom of creating elaborate trompe l'oeil murals. La Fresque des Lyonnais is wrapped around a wedge-shaped building on the banks of the Saône.

If you love Paris, Lyon is a great alternative. It compresses all the best elements of the capital in a handy, pocket-sized version, and you can get there easily on the Eurostar from Kent in under five hours, via Paris or Lille.

The view of Vieux Lyon (the old town) is reminiscent of gazing down from Sacré Coeur, and Le Tour Métallique does a good impersonation of the Eiffel Tower. With an efficient Metro system, you can enjoy excellent shopping and museums before heading to any one of the 2,000 restaurants, which share no fewer than 22 Michelin stars.

We decided to orientate ourselves with a



walking tour of Vieux Lyon, navigating our way through the city's unique system of hidden alleys called traboules.

Traboules (a contraction of the Latin transambulare – to walk through) were created to keep silk dry as it was moved around the city. The longest traboule passes through five courtyards, from Rue St-Jean to Rue du Boeuf. Re-emerging on to the latter, we were just yards from our hotel, the romantic Cour des Loges, converted from an old monastery around a central glass-covered courtyard.

The hotel is a great base from which to explore the history of Lyon through its museums. A Lyon City Card, available from the tourist office in Place Bellecour or hotel concierges, gets you into museums, on guided tours and aboard public transport.

The gastronomic highlight of our trip was a magnificent dinner at the restaurant of three-Michelin-starred chef Paul Bocuse, in his riverside mansion at Collonges-sur-Saône.

At 220 euros per person, the Menu Grande Tradition Classique is a gastronomic treat.

The next morning, we took a short walk to the Sunday food market, where we stocked up on cheeses, salami, baguettes and a fruit tart for our picnic on the train home.

There was just time before our departure to tour the 19th-century basilica. The 100-year-old funicular by the cathedral whisked us up the Fourvière Hill before we climbed the stairs, first to the arched stone gallery, then on to a small museum in a gantry, before finally stepping out on to the roof.

The 300 steps did make me gasp a little, but it was the view of the city sprawled out below that was truly breathtaking.

Travel facts

- Caroline Hendrie was a guest of Eurostar, which offers London to Lyon return fares, via Lille on Eurostar and TGV, from £109.
- Reservations: 08432 186 186 and www.eurostar.com.
- Cour des Loges, 0033 4 7277 4444 and www.courdesloges.com double rooms start at 240 euros (£200). Breakfast extra (£22).
- Paul Bocuse, 00 33 4 7242 9090, www.bocuse.fr.
- Lyon information, www.en.lyon-france.com.
- Short-break operators to Lyon include French Travel (FTS), which offers two nights' B&B at three-star Ibis Hotel from £252, inc. return rail travel.
- FTS reservations: 0844 848 8843 and www.f-t-s.co.uk.

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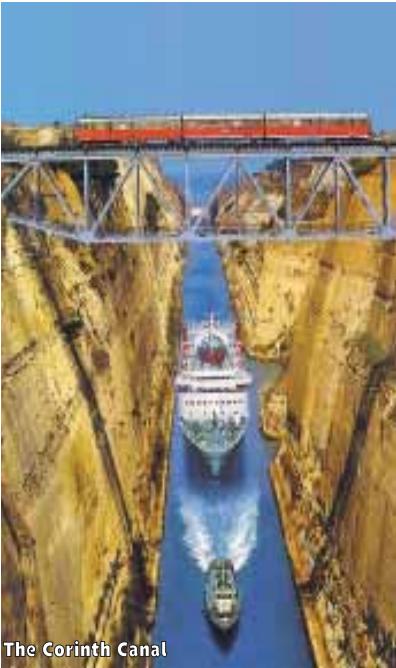
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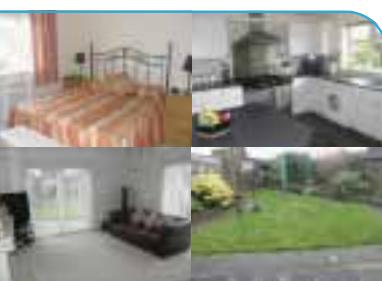


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Boosting the pool of IT talent



HANDS ON: Northgate Managed Services will be helping train 10 new IT apprentices over an 18-month period

TEN new IT apprentices will be starting an 18-month training programme in Tonbridge as part of a new scheme from Northgate Managed Services.

The young workers will be attending Hugh Christie College one day a week to study for an NVQ Level 3 in IT systems and support, and will receive hands-on training at some of the schools across Kent that Northgate provides services to.

Each apprentice will be given a personal development plan which develops core skills and competencies such as communication, time management, customer service, problem solving and more.

Northgate chief executive Andy Ross said: "As a successful and growing IT services company we are committed to working with young people in the communities where we are based.

"By offering an IT apprenticeship scheme to school leavers, we are developing a qualified and talented workforce that will help us grow our business and provide

Kent with an influx of new IT talent. Hugh Christie is at the forefront of educational technology to drive teaching and learning. We are proud to be working with such an inspirational team to help deliver on-the-job training as part of our apprenticeship."

On completion of the programme, every successful apprentice will hold a formal NVQ qualification, have 18 months of work experience and the potential to move into permanent positions in Northgate.

Kent County Council's cabinet member for education, Cllr Sarah Hohler, said: "The Northgate scheme offers young people a fantastic opportunity to gain practical skills and work experience while working towards a nationally recognised qualification.

"These modern apprenticeships are exactly the type of initiatives we need to deliver to make sure students are equipped to meet the needs of a 21st century workforce."

Email info@northgate-is.com for more information.

Returning to full fitness

A SCHEME aimed at supporting employees suffering from ill health is being run through Kent County Council.

The Fit for Work project is a free service that works with employers, staff, GPs and other specialists to provide personal 'back-to-work' support and advice in the early stages of sickness.

It also helps tackle underlying health conditions and any other barriers to work.

Patricia Smith runs a private nursing home in Temple Ewell, near Dover, but when one of her employees required nursing care following an operation on her spine, she needed some back-up.

"My kitchen supervisor Jenny is a hard-working and dedicated member of staff," she said. "And I knew she would be desperate to

By STEVE KNIGHT

steve.knight@kosmedia.co.uk

be back at work full-time as soon as possible.

"When you're a small business, as we are, having a member of staff off sick can be tough. However, I knew if Jenny returned too soon and took on too much that we would be back to the drawing board and that her recovery could take so much longer."

A referral to the Fit for Work service can be made by employers, the member of staff themselves, or their GP.

Once a referral is made, one of the scheme's health professionals will contact the employee to discuss a personalised programme and will be able to call on the help of a team of occupational therapists, employment specialists, psychologists and physiotherapists.

"They explained the service to me and I knew Jenny would benefit from their advice," said Patricia. "They met with Jenny and me, and we talked through some of the issues she was experiencing. We agreed on a 'return to work' plan which included shorter days, part-time hours and lighter duties to start with, until she

felt fitter. They also liaised with her GP and other medical staff to ensure she was on the road to recovery throughout the process."

According to KCC, the total cost of working-age ill health in the UK exceeds £100 billion per year and can have a serious impact on business – particularly small and medium-sized companies. However, thanks to the Fit for Work scheme Jenny is now back at work full-time just six months on from her operation.

Patricia said: "Having the Fit for Work service endorse my concerns really helped. I would certainly use the service again. It's like having an extra pair of hands to help with staff issues. I would recommend the service to anyone."

Call 01843 830220 for more information or write to the Fit for Work Service, St Augustine's Business Centre, 125 Canterbury Road, Westgate-on-Sea, CT8 8NL.

WHAT is your business doing to help Keep Kent Working?

Are you running an apprenticeship scheme to attract young workers? Are your employees being sent on training courses to aid their personal development? Or are you funding a university scholarship to help find the businessmen and women of the future?

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Tools of the skilled trade

CONSTRUCTION students from across the county will battle it out in the annual Kent Skilled Up competition next month.

Young people aged 16 to 19 will tackle a series of tasks in the Makita-sponsored event, including brickwork, joinery, carpentry, plastering, tiling, electrical, and painting and decorating.

The heats will be held at five colleges throughout the county, with the final – hosted by BBC Grand Designs presenter Roger Bisby – at Thanet College on June 29.

Prizes of tools, gift vouchers and certificates will be awarded to first, second and third in each discipline.

Makita's regional sales manager David Hales said: "It's good to be working with the Kent colleges again and we're pleased to be sharing the skills of our demonstrators, who do a fabulous job with the students.

"Taking part isn't mandatory but will give



contestants experience in being competitive, in working well and efficiently, and in helping prepare for professional life."

The first heats for this year's Skilled Up competition will be held at MidKent College, the Broadstairs and Ramsgate campuses of Thanet College, and Canterbury College on Wednesday, March 2.

The final batch will be on the following day at the Dartford and Gravesend campuses of North West Kent College, and the Ashford and Folkestone campuses of K College.

The competition is also being backed by the family-run Thanet Tool Supplies of Ashford.

Managing director Paul Brown said: "Helping young people while they train is to everyone's benefit and they deserve to have the best equipment and materials to work with if they are to do well. We're behind them all the way."



Striking a chord on CBBC

A GRADUATE from the University for the Creative Arts at Rochester is in the running to have his short film for children picked up by the BBC.

David Keefe, 22, who earned a first-class honours degree in computer-generated arts and animation, uploaded An Audience With to the CBBC website with hopes it will be developed into a full series.

Children who visit the site are being asked to vote for the film, which is about a

boy who is tormented by neighbours while trying to play his guitar.

David said: "Getting work on CBBC is a massive achievement for a recent graduate like me.

"It would be fantastic if they wanted to commission a series. I've got lots more ideas to evolve the characters in the film.

"Obviously it would be a challenge to get a team together, but being thrown in at the deep end is how I work best."

The best of Times at Kent

THE University of Kent has been ranked joint 15th in the UK in The Times' annual student experience survey.

The study – which scores universities in categories including quality of teaching, work experience and social life – also ranks Kent 10th for the most improved student experience.

Pro-vice-chancellor Prof Alex Hughes wel-

comed the findings.

He said: "This important feedback from our students reflects the quality of experience we aim to provide.

"By listening to students we will continue to develop all aspects of our academic, social and environmental provision – factors that have made the University of Kent one of the most popular in the UK."



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We require an assistant whose role will be to help the car sales staff in their work to sell new and used cars. This will include direct contact with customers and also varied work helping with preparation, display and advertising of cars.

Applicants must be hard working, with good attention to detail and a full clean driving licence. The position is full time based at our showrooms in Canterbury and will include Saturday work. Wages according to age and experience.

Closing date for application is **28th February 2011**

For an application form please contact:
Stephanie Woodcock on reception@canterburysaab.co.uk
Westminster Road, Vauxhall Industrial Estate, Canterbury, CT1 1YY

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We are looking to recruit a Trainee Sales Specialist for our Jaguar dealership in Ashford and also for our Canterbury based Land Rover operation. The successful applicants will not necessarily have worked in the motor trade before but they will be comfortable dealing with customers and colleagues and have a pleasant and outgoing personality. Full training will be given to the right people.

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An experienced Service Advisor is required for our busy Malthouse Reception and also for our Land Rover Reception. Both positions are based in Canterbury and once again the successful applicants will be comfortable dealing with customers both face to face and on the telephone and be professional throughout. It is important that the applicants be good team players and experienced at dealing with staff at all levels.

MOTOR VEHICLE TECHNICIAN

A Motor Vehicle Technician is required for our Land Rover operation in Canterbury. The successful applicant will already be an experienced Technician ideally with the Land Rover franchise. However, full training will be given to the right applicant. This is an exciting time for Land Rover with the new Evoque due to arrive in September of this year.

Please send your CV for the attention of Lana Farr at:
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To work in the Council's parks, playing fields, cemetery, open spaces, on Public Rights of Way (under KCC authority), and other contracts entered into by the Council. To assist with the maintenance of the amenities areas including making sure that the parks, recreation grounds and playgrounds are kept clean and litter free. To maintain a high standard of work and to ensure that the Council's name is kept in good standing.

It is a full-time permanent post attracting a salary of **£15,594 per annum**. Application forms can be collected from **Edenbridge Town Council, Doggett's Barn, 72A High St, Edenbridge, Kent, TN8 5AR** or by email from townclerk@edenbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk

The closing date for applications is **noon Monday 7 March 2011**

Interviews to be held on **Monday 14 March**

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- Must work well as part of a team
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If interested, please contact **Barbara Coker** on **01303 817072**

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For further information contact **Jenny Rutherford**
jrutherford@hughchristie.kent.sch.uk

Closing date for applications: **18th March 2011**

Interviews to be held: week commencing 28th March 2011

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. As part of this process, all successful candidates will be required to apply for an enhanced CRB disclosure.

The Folkestone Academy



SEASONAL GROUNDS PERSON

*Six Months contract to commence April 2011
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For further details please go to our website at www.folkestoneacademy.com or contact Marion Wigington on 01843 598550 for further details.

Closing date: Monday 2nd March 2011

The Folkestone Academy is committed to the safeguarding of children and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The successful applicant will be subject to appropriate child protection screening including checks with previous employers and the Criminal Records Bureau. The Academy is an equal opportunities employer.

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Academy Lane, Folkestone, Kent CT19 5FP
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Due to the conditions and complex needs of the pupils at Abbey Court School, continuity and consistency of support is paramount and therefore candidates for all positions will need to commit to the full working hours of the post.

This School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Any offer of appointment for post is subject to a satisfactory Criminal Record Bureau Disclosure.

For an application pack, please write to/telephone

(stating the role for which you are applying):

Mrs Linda Taylor, Abbey Court School, Rede Court Road, Strood, Kent. ME2 3SP (01634 338236)

Please note CV's will not be accepted.

Closing date: 11.3.11

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Contra-intuitively, experience, whilst helpful is not essential. What makes the difference at Bradstow are the professional and personal qualities of the people who work here. What you, as an individual have to offer these complex but absolutely fascinating young people who attend our school.

You will be provided with an extended and on-going package of training and support that is second to none, starting with a non-contact induction programme of at least three weeks. We believe that staff training and development, together with the other staff support mechanisms in place, are essential in our specialised field and are at the core of the success of the school.

All our teachers and most other contact staff, are fully trained and supported in Gentle Teaching, TEACCH, Prospect Positive Behaviour Support, PECs and other Augmentative Communication Systems, as well as being provided with a wide range of other specialist skills. You will also be encouraged and supported to extend your skills and knowledge by undertaking further Degree and Diploma studies.

In addition to judging Bradstow 'Outstanding' in all appropriate categories, OFSTED 2009 said,

"The curriculum and the quality of teaching and support are exceptional"

"It is to the tremendous credit of a highly skilled and well-qualified team of teachers and support staff that they enable pupils to overcome and cope with the substantial learning and emotional barriers that they face"

"Bradstow is a very complex organization and a centre of excellence in its own field"

If you would like to join our team, and help us to continue to transform the lives of these children and their families, give us a call. Be in no doubt, the work is not easy and you will need to be committed to the needs of the child and the school. In return we offer a highly rewarding and satisfying career, which will both enskill and prepare you for senior and/or specialist leadership Posts as your career develops, with quite a bit of fun thrown in as well!

For SEN specialists, the second SEN point may be available.

For an application form and information pack please call 01843 608727 (24 hour recruitment answer machine), or email personnel@bradstow.wandsworth.sch.uk

Please note that CV's will not be considered.

Applications should be received by 4pm, Friday 11th March 2011.

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Shepway is a coastal district undergoing a transformation through a range of public and private sector initiatives. To complement this activity, the district is keen to ensure that the urban environment across all its towns is improved. As such, a new post has been created within the Economic Regeneration Team to tackle townscape issues.

Your role will be to develop a Townscape Improvement Strategy for the district in collaboration with partner organisations and implement it through a wide range of initiatives.

Application details on this exciting new position can be accessed via www.shepway.gov.uk or alternatively if you would like to discuss this post, please contact Jeremy Whittaker, Economic Regeneration Team Leader on 01303 853375.

The closing date for applications is 4 March 2011

Provisional Interview date is 18 March 2011



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Salary scale: £25,589-£30,205 for 37 hours per week all year

A lecturer is required to deliver high quality education and training, to support students and trainees effectively (including individual and group tutorials), and to further develop the wood occupations curriculum.

Job reference: LCJ001

Closing date: Wednesday 2nd March 2011

Interview date: 23rd March 2011

TROWEL TRADES TECHNICIAN

Salary scale: £7,990-£8,896 for 18.5 hours per week all year

The college is looking to recruit a Trowel Trades Technician to provide support and assistance to staff and students in the workshops as appropriate.

Job reference: TTT001

Closing date: Wednesday 18th March 2011

JOB BROKER

Salary Scale: £22,289 - £26,408 for 37 hours per week, all year

FIXED TERM UNTIL 30 SEPTEMBER 2011

The college is looking to recruit to the above post to provide a job brokerage function for projects in the College.

Job reference: JB001

Closing date: Wednesday 2nd March 2011

Interview date: 14th March 2011

For further details and to apply online please visit our website www.thanet.ac.uk and click on 'Vacancies'.

Alternatively contact the HR Office, Thanet College, Ramsgate Road, Broadstairs, Kent, CT10 1PN or telephone our application line for an application pack on (01843) 605052.

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MidKent College based in the Medway Towns and Maidstone are seeking to appoint an outstanding individual in the following areas:

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Ref: SESS10

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Technician in Hair and Beauty

Ref: M0296

Salary: £15,453- £17,243 per annum
Fixed Term Maternity Cover
Medway

We are looking for an organised candidate to assist the smooth running of the Hair and Beauty department. Responsibilities will include providing technical support to staff and students and setting-up the classrooms as required. Experience in the industry would be advantageous.

CLOSING DATE: Wednesday 16 March 2011

MidKent College and RBLI Employment Solutions are working in partnership to support disabled applicants. For assistance please contact RBLI on 0800783114 or visit their website www.rbli.co.uk

For an application pack and further details visit www.midkent.ac.uk or e mail job.applications@midkent.ac.uk. Alternatively you may contact Human Resources on 01634 383102.

The College is committed to safeguarding children and young people therefore any offer of employment will be subject to a CRB check.

MidKent College is an equal opportunities employer



Westlands Academies Trust



THE WESTLANDS SCHOOL & THE WESTLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Westlands Avenue, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 1PF

Interested in a career in teaching and joining our Graduate Teacher Training Programme?

Westlands Academies Trust has vacancies for graduates who wish to undertake school-based teacher training, whilst receiving financial support. Professional help is given to successful applicants to enable them to begin teaching classes at the earliest appropriate opportunity.

Applications are invited from graduates who are interested in teaching Science or Design Technology at Secondary level, and in the Primary sector, all subjects in the curriculum.

Westlands Academies Trust has an excellent reputation for high quality training within a friendly and supportive environment. This is an excellent opportunity to acquire practical teaching experience under the guidance of highly skilled and dedicated professionals.

Application forms are available from the school or online. These should be returned with a CV and letter of application. CVs are not accepted without an application form.

Closing date: Wednesday 9 March 2011

Westlands Academies Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This post is subject to an enhanced CRB check.

Tel: 01795 477475 Fax: 01795 479461
Email: swa@westlands.kent.sch.uk

Executive Headteacher: Mr J Whitcombe MA
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To apply/more information:
Belgian Cafe
culturia@hotmail.co.uk
Quoting Job Ref: kos

Kitchen Manager

Canterbury

Salary Negotiable
To apply/more information:
Old Buttermarket
applications@jobsforkent.co.uk
Quoting Job Ref: kos

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Cover Supervisors

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To apply/more information:
London Teaching Pool Ltd
kentteam@tthp.co.uk
Quoting Job Ref: kos

Teachers

All Kent

Salary Negotiable
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London Teaching Pool Ltd
kentteam@tthp.co.uk
Quoting Job Ref: kos

Construction, Architecture, Surveyors

Fencing Installers

South East Area

Salary Negotiable
To apply/more information:
Pembury Group
applications@kosmedia.co.uk
Quoting Job Ref: kos

Customer Service, Call Centre

Telesales

Maidstone

Salary Negotiable
To apply/more information:
Theme Events
jsainsbury@btconnect.com
Quoting Job Ref: REC500

Receptionist / Customer Service

Canterbury

Salary 14k
To apply/more information:
Canterbury Health Practice
monique@canterburyhealthpractice.co.uk
Quoting Job Ref: Rec Aug10

Administrator and PA to Doctor

Canterbury

Salary 14k
To apply/more information:
Canterbury Health Practice
monique@canterburyhealthpractice.co.uk
Quoting Job Ref: PA Aug10

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the Faversham Hop Festival Ltd have applied for a new 'Time Limited' Premises Licence for Faversham Town Centre (Preston Street and Guildhall areas) covering the performance of live music, dance and Punch and Judy for the 21st Annual Hop Festival on Saturday 3rd of September 2011 (0900 to 1700 hrs) and Sunday 4th September 2011 (0900 to 1700 hrs).

Faversham Hop Festival Ltd.
P.O.Box 266

Faversham, Kent, ME13 3AW

HIGHWAYS - District of Swale

BANISTER HILL & HEARTS DELIGHT, BORDEN
(PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2011
THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS
AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY
RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

To allow BT access to an underground structure in the road, Kent County Council intends to make an Order prohibiting through traffic on Banister Hill & Hearts Delight, Borden, on or after 14 March 2011 for up to 3 days or until the works have been completed.

The road will be closed between the junctions with Borden Lane and Hearts Delight Road. The alternative route is via The Street, Pond Farm Road, Sutton Baron Road and Wrens Road. It is planned the road will be closed between 9.30 am and 3.30 pm and re-opened outside these hours.

PRIORY ROAD, FAVERSHAM (PROHIBITION OF
DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2011
THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS
AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY
RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Because of works to install a new water meter and associated pipework, Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting through traffic on Priory Road, Faversham, on or after 23 February 2011 for up to 8 days or until the works have been completed. The alternative route is via Dark Hill And Davington Hill.

(VARIOUS ROADS, RODMERSHAM) (30 MPH
SPEED LIMIT) ORDER 2011

Notice is hereby given that the KENT COUNTY COUNCIL proposes to make the above named Orders under section 84(1), (2) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, (hereinafter called "the Act") and of all other enabling powers, and after consultation with the chief officer of police in accordance with paragraph 20 of Part III of Schedule 9 to the Act.

The effect of the proposed Order will introduce a 30 mph speed limit in Rodmersham on the following roads or lengths of road:

Green Lane	Stockers Hill
Fruiterers Close	Stockers Brow
Highested Road	Cromers Road
Highested Valley	Bottom Pond Road
Cheney Hill	Bottles Lane
Brownings Orchard	

A copy of the proposed Order, statement of the Council's reasons for proposing to make the Order, a map indicating the location and the effect and a copy of any other Orders which will be amended by the proposed Order may be examined at the Council Offices of Swale Borough Council, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent and at Kent County Council, Sessions House, Maidstone during normal opening times.

If you wish to offer support for or object to the proposed Order you should send your grounds for your observations in writing to the Transport and Development Manager Kent Highway Services, Ashford Highway Depot, Javelin Way, Henwood Industrial Estate, Ashford, TN24 8AD or by email to td.eastkent@kent.gov.uk by 12 noon on 17 March 2011.

(VARIOUS ROADS, BREDFAR, SWALE) (30 MPH
SPEED LIMIT) ORDER 2011

Notice is hereby given that the KENT COUNTY COUNCIL proposes to make the above named Orders under section 84(1), (2) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, (hereinafter called "the Act") and of all other enabling powers, and after consultation with the chief officer of police in accordance with paragraph 20 of Part III of Schedule 9 to the Act.

The effect of the proposed Order will introduce a 30 mph speed limit on the following roads or lengths of road:

Bredgar Road	from the junction with Rockery Close for a distance of 420 metres in an easterly direction and 220 metres in a westerly direction to the
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Swanton Street	from the junction with Bashford Lane for a distance of 475 metres in a southerly direction and 375 metres in a northerly direction to the existing 30 mph speed limit terminal points.
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A copy of the proposed Order, statement of the Council's reasons for proposing to make the Order, a map indicating the location and the effect and a copy of any other Orders which will be amended by the proposed Order may be examined at the Council Offices of Swale Borough Council, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent and at Kent County Council, Sessions House, Maidstone during normal opening times.

If you wish to offer support for or object to the proposed Order you should send your grounds for your observations in writing to the Transport and Development Manager Kent Highway Services, Ashford Highway Depot, Javelin Way, Henwood Industrial Estate, Ashford, TN24 8AD or by email to td.eastkent@kent.gov.uk by 12 noon on 17 March 2011. Katherine Kerswell, Group Managing Director County Hall, Maidstone

For further information please
contact Kent Highway services on
0845 247 800 (local rate) or
visit www.kent.gov.uk/highways



Kent County Council
Inclusive Design and Placemaking
Supplementary Appendix to Kent Design Guide
Notice of Public Participation
Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act (2004)

Statutory Instrument No.2204 Town & Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004, amended 2008 - Regulation 17 Developed collaboratively between Kent County Council, Maidstone Borough Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, Inclusive Design and Placemaking (hereinafter Inclusive Design) supports the Kent Design Guide (KDG) by providing specific detail and technical guidance on how to address accessibility for all Kent's future built environment.

It is intended Inclusive Design will ultimately be adopted by Kent County Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the KDG. As such, the document will act as a reference point for developers and their landscape, urban design and planning consultants at an early stage in the planning process, as well as a key reference tool for County, Unitary and District Authorities who are responsible for good quality design of the public realm in Kent.

Inclusive Design applies specifically to the public realm, including arrival at a building or public space. The guidance can facilitate how planners consider access issues early on in their pre-planning application discussions, and can help those determining planning applications to ensure proposed new developments meet specific design standards. Inclusive Design also provides links to relevant legislation, standards, guidance and best practice case studies, to ensure that a more comprehensive approach to accessibility is considered during the early stages of design and development. An Access Audit & Technical Guidance Toolkit has also been produced, to be read alongside the draft Inclusive Design document.

The Draft Inclusive Design document can be viewed online and downloaded from Kent County Council's website at www.kent.gov.uk/inclusivedesignandplacemaking and is available for public inspection at Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone. Copies will also be made available for inspection at all libraries and gateways from Monday to Friday during normal opening hours.

Any person or organisation may make representations on the document, which will be considered before adoption. Those wishing to make comments are encouraged to use the Council's web-based consultation system or the comments forms available with inspection copies of the documents and on the Council's website.

Representations relating to the draft Inclusive Design document can be returned as follows:

- (1) Online using the Council's web-based consultation system at: www.kent.gov.uk/inclusivedesignandplacemaking
- (2) By email to: kdconsultation@kent.gov.uk
- (3) By post to: The Project Support Team (Inclusive Design & Placemaking), Regeneration & Economy Division, Chief Executive's Department, KCC, 2nd floor, Invicta House, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1XX.

Only representations that are made in writing (including electronically) and arrive at the addresses or the sites specified above within the six-week period from 28 February 2011 to 11 April 2011 will have the right to be considered.

Representations may be accompanied by a request to be notified at a specific address when the Inclusive Design & Placemaking document is adopted.

Kent Design Initiative, Chief Executive's Directorate, Invicta House, County Hall, Maidstone ME14 1XX.

HIGHWAYS - District of Canterbury

B2068 STONE STREET, PETHAM, CANTERBURY (40 MPH SPEED LIMIT TEMPORARY ORDER)
THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

For the safety of the public and workforce during water mains replacement works, Kent County Council has made an Order to impose a Temporary Mandatory Speed Limit of 40 mph on B2068 Stone Street, Petham, Canterbury, on or after 28 February 2011 for up to 12 weeks or until the works have been completed.

The section of road affected is between the junction with Chequers Hill and the existing 40 mph / National Speed Limit to the south east of the junction with Charlham Downs Road, when the relevant signs are displayed on site.

HIGHWAYS - District of Dover

AGESTER LANE, DENTON (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2011
THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Because of the installation of a new electrical supply, Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting through traffic on Agester Lane, Denton, on or after 28 February 2011 for up to 5 days or until the works have been completed.

The road will be closed in the vicinity of Meg's Dean.

The alternative route is via Snode Hill, A260 Canterbury Road, Reece Lane, Golden Hill, Vershall Lane, Bunkers Hill and Agester Lane.

HIGHWAYS - District of Sevenoaks

COOPERS LANE, PENSHURST - (TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2011
THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that owing to the likelihood of danger to the public whilst works are carried out on or near the highway the Kent County Council has made an Order restricting the use by vehicular traffic on Coopers Lane, Penshurst for 500m from Hamsell Oast in a south westerly direction.

The Order will become effective on 28th February 2011, will be in operation and remain valid for a maximum period of 18 months; the works are planned to commence 4th March 2011 and last 3 weeks. These restrictions will be effective when the appropriate signage is in place.

The alternative route for the above restriction will be via: Poundsbridge Hill and Coopers Lane.

The purpose of the closure is to facilitate carriageway patching and kerb installation.

For further information please contact Kent Highway services on 08458 247 800 (local rate) or visit www.kent.gov.uk/highways

BRASSED LANE, KNOCKHOLT - (TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2011
THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that owing to the likelihood of danger to the public whilst works are carried out on or near the highway the Kent County Council has made an Order restricting the use by vehicular traffic on Brasted Lane, Knockholt between Stoneings Lane and Main Road. The Order will become effective on 28th February 2011, will be in operation and remain valid for a maximum period of 18 months; the works are planned to last 5 days. These restrictions will be effective when the appropriate signage is in place.

The alternative route for the above restriction will be via: Stoneings Lane and Main Road.

The purpose of the closure is to facilitate installation of a replacement pole and transfer of power cables.

HIGH STREET, EYNFSORD - (TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2011
THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that owing to the likelihood of danger to the public whilst works are carried out on or near the highway the Kent County Council has made an Order restricting the use by vehicular traffic on High Street, Eynsford between Priory Lane and Bower Lane. The Order will become effective on 28th February 2011, will be in operation and remain valid for a maximum period of 18 months; the works are planned to last 2 nights between 21.00 – 05.00 hours. These restrictions will be effective when the appropriate signage is in place.

The alternative route for the above restriction will be via: A225 Eynsford Road, A20 to Wrotham, A227 Borough Green Road/Wrotham Road, Western Road, A25 to Sevenoaks and A25 to Eynsford. The purpose of the closure is to facilitate installation of high friction surfacing and carriageway markings.

GRANVILLE ROAD, SEVENOAKS - (TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2011
THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that owing to the likelihood of danger to the public whilst works are carried out on or near the highway the Kent County Council intends to make an Order restricting the use by vehicular traffic on Granville Road, Sevenoaks from its junction with London Road to the boundary of Granville Court. The Order will become effective on 14th March 2011, will be in operation and remain valid for a maximum period of 18 months; the works are planned to last 8 weeks. These restrictions will be effective when the appropriate signage is in place.

The alternative route for the above restriction will be via: Gordon Road, Argyle Road, London Road and Tubs Hill. The purpose of the closure is to facilitate working space for the construction of a new highway retaining structure.

BILLET HILL, ASH-CUM-RIDLEY - (TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2011
THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that owing to the likelihood of danger to the public whilst works are carried out on or near the highway the Kent County Council intends to make an Order restricting the use by vehicular traffic on Billet Hill, Ash-Cum-Ridley between Fawkham Green Road to Ash Road. The Order will become effective on 14th March 2011, will be in operation and remain valid for a maximum period of 18 months; the works are planned to last 5 days. These restrictions will be effective when the appropriate signage is in place.

The alternative route for the above restriction will be via: Crowhurst Lane, A20 London Road, Ash Lane, South Ash Road and The Street. The purpose of the closure is to facilitate BT works.

HIGHWAYS - Borough of Maidstone

(STILEBRIDGE LANE, LINTON)(PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2011
THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that because works are proposed to be carried out on or near a road the Kent County Council intends to make an Order prohibiting the use by through traffic on Stilebridge Lane Linton on or after Tuesday 15th March Monday 2011 for a period of up to 5 days or until such works are completed.

The alternative route is via Butt Green Lane onto Linton Hill, Staplehurst Road, Forge Lane then onto Lower Farm Road

South East Water Services apologise for any inconvenience caused by these works, which are necessary to provide a water connection to a property. Should you require any further information the Kent Highway Services contact is Lee Mcarthy on 0773485456

HIGHWAYS - Borough of Tonbridge and Malling

(BASTED LANE, BOROUGH GREEN)(PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2011
THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

NOTICE is hereby given that because works are proposed to be carried out on or near a road the Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting the use by through traffic on Basted Lane outside of Landway Farm on or after Monday 28th February 2011 for a period of up to 1 week or until such works are completed.

The alternative route is via Winfield Lane, Bourne Lane, Dux Hill, Dux Lane, Long Mill Lane, Basted Lane.

BT Openreach apologise for any inconvenience caused by these works, which are necessary to enable duct installation. Should you require any further information for these works, the contact is Kenton Stewart on 01795 435729.

KATHERINE KERSWELL, Group Managing Director
Kent County Council, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent ME14 2XQ

Public Notice

I Benoy Sebastian are applying for a new Premises License at the Pioneer Food Land, 9 Canterbury Street, Gillingham, ME7 5TP. My application is made to Medway Council, Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham, Kent ME4 4TR. I am applying for the following licensable activities Sale of Alcohol (7am – 11pm, Monday – Sunday)

Should you make representations to the Council it must be in writing and/or you can view my application by contacting the Council on 01634 337107 or 377108 by 17th March 2011.

It is an offence to knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application. A person guilty of an offence under this section is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding £5,000.

GOODS VEHICLE OPERATOR'S LICENCE

Sarwan Singh trading as Punjab Cash and Carry Ltd of Unit 3, Railway Street Industrial Estate, Railway Street, Gillingham, Kent, ME7 1YA, is applying to change an existing license as follows:

To keep an extra 2 goods vehicles and 0 trailers at the operating centre at Unit 3 Railway Street Industrial Estate, Railway Street, Gillingham, Kent, ME7 1YQ

To add an operating centre to keep 3 goods vehicles and 0 trailers at Unit 3 Railway Street Industrial Estate, Railway Street, Gillingham, Kent, ME7 1YQ

Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected,

should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at VOSA, Hillcrest House, 386 Hare Hill Lane, Leeds, LS9 6NF stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representors must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to making representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's Office.

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Town and Country Planning Acts

The Council is required to give notice of the following applications

11/00221/FUL Flat 2 3A Nevill Park, Broadwater

- Blocking existing doorway on east elevation and replacing the windows (5) on part of north elevation with windows and french doors (CA)

11/00333/HOUSE Little Manor Staplehurst Road, Frittenden

- Replace existing glazed roof to conservatory with Cedar shingles and replace white with black guttering (as rest of house) (LB)

11/00335/LBC Little Manor Staplehurst Road, Frittenden

- Listed Building Consent- Replace existing glazed roof to conservatory with Cedar shingles and replace white with black guttering (as rest of house); Remove modern sliding door separating conservatory from main house (LB)

11/00375/HOUSE The Old Rectory The Street, Frittenden

- Detached double garage and woodstore (CA)

11/00368/LBC Shearndfold Farmhouse Church Road, Goudhurst

- Listed Building Consent: Proposed single storey rear extension and window/roof alterations (LB)

11/00351/LBC Hayle Oast Marle Place Road, Horsmonden

- Listed Building Consent: Minor alterations and improvements, including reinstating original features (LB)

11/00274/HOUSE 57 Broadwater Down Royal Tunbridge Wells, Pantiles & St Marks

- Demolition of part ground floor and roof to chalet bungalow, construct two-storey side and rear extensions (CA)

11/00275/CAC 57 Broadwater Down Royal Tunbridge Wells, Pantiles & St Marks

- Conservation Area Consent - Demolition of part ground floor and roof to chalet bungalow (CA)

11/00357/HOUSE 23 Claremont Road Royal Tunbridge Wells, Pantiles & St Marks

- Single storey flat roof extension to side elevation. Cladding of external front and rear walls with featheredged weatherboarding (CA)

11/00244/HOUSE 8 Lansdowne Road Royal Tunbridge Wells, Park

- Extension to rear conservatory (CA)

11/00377/FUL 62 Mount Pleasant Road Royal Tunbridge Wells, Park

- Extension of Time: Provision of roof extension and alterations to increase the number of self-contained residential flats from two to seven, including change of use of first floor area from ancillary offices to residential use (TW/07/04478/FUL refers) (CA)

11/0039/FUL Albans Barn Yard Romford Road, Pembury

- Change of use and conversion of barn to part holiday let and part family annex (LB)

11/0036/FUL Johnson Of Sandhurst Back Road, Sandhurst

- Replacement shopfront (CA) (LB)

11/00379/FUL St Nicholas Church Church Road, Sandhurst

- Extension of Time - (Land adjacent) Change of use of land for extension of churchyard (TW/08/00987 refers) (LB)

11/00349/TELN5 STREET RECORD London Road, Southborough And High Brooms

- Telecommunication Notification: A 12.5m high replica telegraph pole, 1no shared equipment cabinet, 1no slimline meter cabinet and development ancillary thereto (CA)

(DEVPLN) Departure from the Development Plan (PROW) Affecting A Public Right of Way (CA) Affecting a Conservation Area (LB) Affecting a Listed Building (MAJOR) Major Applications (MAST) Mast Applications (EIA) Applications Accompanied by an EIA Statement.

You may view these applications on our website (www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk), at the Old Fire Station, Stone Street, Cranbrook or at Gateway, 8 Grosvenor Road, Tunbridge Wells.

We accept comments online, by email to planningcomments@tunbridgewells.gov.uk or in writing to the address below. Comments should be made within 21 days from the date of this notice, although we may accept them after this date. You should quote the reference and be aware that we make all comments available for inspection, placing them on the file and publishing them on the internet.

We do not publish signatures, telephone numbers or email addresses on the internet.

Jim Kehoe
Head of Planning Services

Town Hall Royal Tunbridge Wells TN1 1RS

Dated: 26 February 2011



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Ford's new Focus looks set to take on the world

First Drive

by
IAINDOOLEY

Ford Focus

EVEN if you don't claim to be a car enthusiast, it would be hard to ignore that the Focus has been a huge hit for Ford. It has been an almost permanent fixture at the top of the sales charts since its original launch, and been the benchmark others have been judged by ever since.

So what's new? In a nutshell, everything. Now positioned as a 'world car' within Ford, this Focus will be sold around the globe. That brings economies of scale, and is one reason why the car can be had with a range of good value optional equipment packages, such as an impressive safety kit bundle.

There's also a greater emphasis on economy and emissions, with the range kicking off with a 109g/km diesel and the promise

of more to come in the future. Engine stop-start technology plus the use of Ford's new EcoBoost petrol engines and fuel-sipping DSG Powershift gearboxes add to Ford's frugal approach to motoring.

It's not a hair shirt experience, though. In keeping with other recent new Fords, the Focus is a polished performer inside and out. Visually this third-generation car boasts a more streamlined and slippery profile. Inside, there's an equally high quality approach to fixtures and fittings.

The cabin is noticeably driver-centric, with the car's major controls close to hand. There's also no shortage of information available to the driver, what with a pair of clear electronic displays – one for the audio unit and one between the main dials.

Fans of the old car will feel right at home thanks to a familiar feel to the various types of switchgear. Newcomers will be faced by a more upbeat and engaging experience than what's available in some rivals, as the overall cabin ambience is lighter and brighter than the traditional German opposition.

It takes more than a cursory glance around the cabin to fully appreciate the lengths Ford has gone to in order to maintain its class-leading status. The same is true out on the road as, initially, the experience appears to have shifted considerably more towards comfort. What has Ford done with the car's sporty and engaging character?

In truth it never left, only this time it's been cleverly contained in a more refined and composed wrapper. Push a little harder in a corner and you'll soon experience some of the old Focus magic. Everything is so darn polished now – Volkswagen and the like should be worried.

Considerable praise should also be directed towards the engine department. Ford is offering 1.6 and 2.0-litre engines in both petrol and diesel, in a range of power outputs. In petrol guise there's a choice of 105, 125 and 150 horsepower, while diesels run from 115 to 140 and 163 horsepower.

Flexible

Predictably, the highest output diesel motor scores well if you plan on racking up the miles. Its flexible nature makes light work of long distances, and its six-speed manual gearbox can be swapped for a DSG-style auto if you wish.

Ford's petrol motors have improved beyond all recognition in recent years. As a willing, free-revving alternative to the more frugal diesel units, such engines prove ideal for shorter, stop-start journeys and boast less weight, which further enhances the car's agility.

As the old saying goes, power is nothing without control, and the Focus isn't short of systems to keep you and the car in check. Apart from the predictable abundance of airbags this Focus can be had with some

interesting Volvo-esque features, which shouldn't be a surprise considering the two were once very close.

Packaged as a bundle of features, you get a blind spot warning, lane departure alert, city speed auto braking function and a speed limit sign reader that displays the relevant information in the electronic fascia readout. It was only a few short years ago that such technology was the preserve of expensive luxury cars, and makes the inclusion in a 'regular' family hatch a big deal. You can thank Ford's economies of scale approach for the decision, and look forward to more of the same in the years to come with other new Fords.

Make no mistake; this Focus is a supremely competent and attractive car.

It might take a few minutes – and a few miles behind the wheel – to fully appreciate the progress made by Ford's engineers, but when you do you'll be pleasantly surprised by what's been achieved.

The combination of big-car refinement and equipment levels, a rounded and polished driving experience and an engine range offering real-world savings are just a few of the many highlights. Even in uncertain times, if its performance is anything to go by this Focus is destined to be another chart topper.



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10 60	CORSA ENERGY 1.2 3DR Metro Blue, delivery miles	
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10 10	CORSA ACTIVE 1.2 3DR Star Silver, 12,830 miles	£7995
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10 10	CORSA ENERGY 1.2 3DR Star Silver, delivery miles	£10995
10 10	CORSA ENERGY 1.2 3DR Star Silver, delivery miles	£10995
10 10	CORSA ENERGY 1.2 3DR White, 3,225 miles	£8995
10 10	CORSA VXR 1.6 3DR Black Sapphire, delivery miles	£14995
10 10	CORSA VXR 1.6 3DR Black Sapphire, delivery miles	£14995
10 10	CORSA VXR 1.6 3DR Black Sapphire, 1,750 miles	£14995

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10 60	ASTRA SPORTS HATCH SRi 1.6 3DR White	£11995
10 10	NEWASTRA SRi TBO 1.6 5DR Black Sapphire, 5,000 miles	£13995

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10 10	ZAFIRA ENERGY 1.8 5DR Sovereign Silver, 1,570 miles	£12995
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10 10	ZAFIRA LIFE 1.6 C/CD 5DR Ultra Blue, 4,690 miles	£11995
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10 10	ZAFIRA ENERGY 1.7 5DR Sovereign Silver	£15995
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10 60	NEW MERIVA EXCLUSIV TBO 1.4 5DR Star Silver	£14995
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10 10	IN SIGNIA EXCLUSIV 1.8 5DR Technical Grey	£14495
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Cars shown for illustration purposes only. Finance subject to status. Vauxhall Lifetime Warranty covers lifetime ownership of first car owner. 100,000 miles limit, annual check required. The warranty excludes wear & tear and serviceable items and the vehicle must be serviced in accordance with the manufacturer's service schedule to continue the lifetime warranty. Vauxhall Retailer or visit www.vauxhall.co.uk/warranty

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*Based on 10,000 miles a year (excess mileage charges apply)

Promotion applies to SEAT Ibiza SC SE Chill 1.4 85PS only, registered between 4th January 2011 and 31st March 2011. Retail customers only. Subject to availability. Figures shown are based on 42 months, assuming a maximum of 10,000 miles per annum. All rentals are quoted inclusive of VAT. An advance rental of £199 is payable, followed by 41 regular monthly rentals of £199. A 5.76p per mile excess mileage charge applies if the annual contract mileage of 10,000 miles is exceeded. The quotation is given subject to the vehicle being serviced and maintained in accordance with manufacturer guidelines. Further charges may be payable if vehicle is returned. Indemnities may be required. Over 18's in the UK only. Excludes the Channel Islands. Subject to status from participating dealers only. Contract hire provided by SEAT Finance, Freepost SEAT Finance. Offer may be varied or withdrawn at any time. Low emissions based on CO2 figures for the SEAT Ibiza starting at 92g/km. **Alloy wheels available on selected models only.

Official fuel consumption for the SEAT Ibiza SC in mpg (litres per 100km); urban 34 (8.3) - 67.3 (4.2); extra-urban 53.3 (5.3) - 91.1 (3.1); combined 44.1 (6.4) - 80.7 (3.5). CO2 emissions 148 - 92 g/km.

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10 60 SEAT Ibiza 1.4 Good Stuff 5-door Hatchback in Black Magic. 2,000 miles. Was: £13,495 **Now: £10,995** Save £2,500!
10 60 SEAT Ibiza 1.4 Good Stuff 5-door Hatchback in Luna Grey. 3,000 miles. Was: £13,495 **Now: £10,995** Save £2,500!
10 60 SEAT Ibiza 1.4 Good Stuff 5-door Hatchback in Emocion Red. 3,500 miles. Was: £13,095 **Now: £10,695** Save £2,400!

07 07 SEAT Leon 2.0 FR TSi 200PS 5-door Hatchback in Black Magic. 34,500 miles. Was: £10,995 **Now: £10,495** Save £500!
10 60 SEAT Ibiza 1.4 SE 5-door Hatchback in Luna Grey. 2,000 miles. Was: £12,050 **Now: £10,395** Save £2,255!
07 57 SEAT Leon 1.9 TDi Styline 5-door Hatchback in Zenith Grey Metallic. 29,000 miles. Was: £9,995 **Now: £9,495** Save £500!
10 10 SEAT Ibiza 1.4 Sport 3-door Hatchback in Emocion Red. 4,000 miles. Was: £12,570 **Now: £9,295** Save £3,275!
08 58 SEAT Leon 1.6 Emocion 5-door Hatchback in Emocion Red. 10,000 miles. Was: £9,795 **Now: £9,295** Save £500!
08 58 SEAT Leon 1.6 Emocion 5-door Hatchback in Crono Yellow. 21,000 miles. Was: £9,495 **Now: £9,195** Save £300!
07 07 SEAT Leon 1.9 TDi Styline 5-door Hatchback in Black Magic Metallic. 37,500 miles. Was: £9,295 **Now: £8,995** Save £300!
08 58 SEAT Ibiza 1.4 16V SE 85PS 5-door Hatchback in Luna Grey. 17,500 miles. Was: £8,295
07 07 SEAT Leon 1.9 TDi PD Styline 5-door Hatchback in Luna Grey Metallic. 54,561 miles. Was: £7,995
08 58 SEAT Ibiza 1.4 SE 5-door Hatchback in Black. 19,000 miles. Was: £7,995
08 08 SEAT Ibiza 1.4 Sportrider 5-door Hatchback in Zenith Grey. 17,000 miles. Was: £6,895
07 56 SEAT Ibiza 1.4 Styline 3-door Hatchback in Luna Grey. Automatic 17,000 miles. Was: £5,795
Other makes
05 05 BMW Z4 3.0i SE 2-door Roadster/Convertible Tiptronic in Maldives Blue. 13,500 miles. Was: £16,750

07 07 Vauxhall Vectra 1.9 CTDi Exclusive 5-door Hatchback Automatic/Tiptronic in Silver. 31,000 miles. Was: £8,295 **Now: £7,795** Save £500!
08 57 Skoda Octavia 1.6 FSi Classic 5-door Hatchback in Gold Metallic. 23,600 miles. Was: £7,995 **Now: £7,295** Save £700!
07 07 Renault Clio 1.4 Dynamique 5-door Hatchback in Mercury Metallic. 24,500 miles. Was: £7,295 **Now: £6,995** Save £300!
07 07 Skoda Roomster 2 1.4 5-door Hatchback in Deep Sea Blue. 23,000 miles. Was: £7,695 **Now: £6,995** Save £700!
08 08 Renault Twingo 1.2 GT 3-door Hatchback in Black. 12,000 miles. Was: £6,995 **Now: £6,395** Save £600!
07 07 Renault Modus 1.4 16V Dynamique 5-door Hatchback in Antique Green. 10,800 miles. Was: £6,995 **Now: £6,295** Save £700!
07 07 Vauxhall Agila 1.2 Design 5-door MPV in Star Silver. 9,800 miles. Was: £6,495 **Now: £5,995** Save £500!
07 57 Ford Fusion 1.4 Style Climate 5-door Hatchback Automatic in Tonic Blue. 17,500 miles. Was: £5,995
08 57 Ford Ka 1.3 Zetec Climate 3-door Hatchback in Ocean Blue. 26,500 miles. Was: £5,495
05 05 Vauxhall Astra 1.8 Club 5-door Hatchback in Star Silver Metallic. 34,500 miles. Was: £4,995
07 07 Proton Gen-2 1.6 GL5 5-door Hatchback in Passion Blue. 28,000 miles. Was: £4,695 **Now: £4,295** Save £400!

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FIRST GEAR



New Astra model trumps key rivals

VAUXHALL has announced a new Astra model, which the company claims squarely targets similarly-priced five-door hatch rivals from Ford and VW by offering levels of standard equipment and trim not usually seen outside the options list.

Starting at £18,110 for the 1.4-litre Turbo model, the ES Tech comes as standard with a sat-nav system (including CD player, MP3, USB, iPod control, seven speakers and aux-in socket), Bluetooth, a DAB radio, 17ins alloy wheels and air-con.

This complements the already generous level of standard equipment

found in most Astra models, such as curtain airbags, ESP, daytime running lights, cruise control and steering wheel-mounted audio controls.

This is, according to Vauxhall, bad news for the Astra's rivals. Compared with the £800 more expensive VW Golf 1.4 TSI Match, the Astra ES Tech 1.4 Turbo gains sat-nav, in addition to offering an extra 18 horsepower.

For diesel buyers, the Astra ES Tech is available with the 125 horsepower 1.7 CDTi engine, and with sub-120g/km emissions this version is one of Vauxhall's growing range of ecoFLEX models.

Nissan takes the wait off



DUE TO the unprecedented demand for its Juke, Qashqai and Qashqai+2 models, Nissan has taken an innovative step to ensure customers are happy – and mobile – while waiting for their new car to arrive.

The company will be offering a free loan car for buyers facing a delivery lead time of more than

three months to tide them over until their new Nissan arrives.

Customers ordering a new Juke will be offered use of a Micra, while Qashqai and Qashqai+2 buyers will be offered the use of a Note, completely free of charge. Even insurance cover is included, subject to normal terms and conditions.

Little Kia could save you a lot

JANUARY'S VAT rise may have added extra costs to buying a new car, but Kia can save the cost-conscious motorist more than 20 per cent.

Kia has extended its popular seven-year switch programme and upped the savings by £500 on selected models to £2,000.

For customers with a seven-year-old car with a maximum of 100,000 miles, they can now swap their old banger for either a new Picanto 1.0 'I' from just £5,370, or a wider choice from the Rio range from just £6,540. To qualify the vehicle must have been first registered in the UK on or before June 30, 2004.

But for those with no car to trade-in, the Rio range is available from just £7,995 for the Rio 1.4 'I', or from £8,995 for the highly-equipped Rio 1.4 Domino which comes with 15ins alloys, front fog lights, premium upholstery, leather steering wheel, air-conditioning, six airbags and ESC.



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Motability

by STEVE LOADER

SAAB dealers are celebrating the first anniversary of the Swedish icon's rebirth by inviting motorists to an exclusive Independence event over this weekend, concluding on Monday.

It is one year since American car giant General Motors (GM) sold Saab Automobile to Dutch supercar marque Spyker, sparking a fanfare worthy of the great escapologist Houdini.

For GM had all but given up hope of finding a buyer for what it regarded as a loss-making basket case and had closed production at Saab's Trollhättan plant – the ailing patient's life support had been switched off.

But an 11th hour resuscitation was assembled and, one year on, all the vital signs of the old pre-GM Saab – a byword for automotive innovation – are showing once more and with a hint of mischief in choosing 'Independence Day' to underline its first birthday since escaping the clutches of the American GM colossus.

Glyn Williams, dealer principal at Canterbury Saab said: "Saab has come a long way in the last 12 months and here at Canterbury Saab it has been exciting to watch the company grow as we've launched a series of new products including the all-new Saab 9-5 Saloon and the new 9-3 low emissions engines.

"We've got many loyal Saab customers in Canterbury and we wanted to say 'thank you' by giving them the opportunity to take advantage of some truly exclusive deals over Independence weekend."

Visitors to Saab dealerships can benefit from new finance offers including a £2,500 trade-in allowance and zero per cent finance, whilst Saab customers will be offered a free visual

Saab Independence Day celebrates great escape



UPDATED: New SportWagon is expected to take more than half of the Saab 9-5 sales in the UK when it arrives later this year

health check for their vehicle.

Dealers are also offering 2010 approved used Saabs at keen prices and customers who buy any vehicle until the end of February are entered into a competition to try to win back the price they pay for their new Saab.

Since forming an independent company with Spyker, Saab has quickly pressed ahead with new products: the eagerly awaited Saab 9-5 SportWagon – expected to account for more than half of all 9-5 sales – arrives soon followed by the luxurious Saab 9-4X, Saab's first ever crossover vehicle.

The compact executive 9-3 range, which includes saloon, SportWagon and all-wheel drive 9-3X, and Convertible, has also been updated and the line-up streamlined for the 2011 model year. Most noticeable is the sleeker front end and 'ice block' headlight array.



SHARP: Independence strictly limited edition Convertible highlights the sleeker front end revisions to the Saab 9-3 compact executive range – note the new 'ice block' headlight array

Looking ahead, Saab has already formed partnerships with other leading innovators, including an agreement with BMW to supply petrol engines for next generation Saab models.

Saab was founded in 1937 as an aircraft manufacturer; its first car was unveiled 10 years later. The car division was then created as a separate entity in 1990, jointly owned by

the Saab Scania Group and General Motors, before becoming a wholly-owned GM subsidiary in 2000.

But the marriage never really worked, with Saab's famed individualism submerged and the brand's diehard fans eventually voted with their feet. Newly independent, the pressure is now on for Saab to win back former fans and recruit new ones.



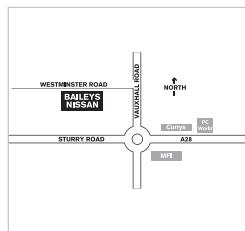
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*Refers to EXTRA URBAN fuel consumption figures – based on Micra 1.2 with manual transmission on a full tank of petrol. [†]Model shown is Micra 1.2 Tekna manual priced at £12,350 on the road plus optional metallic paint at £400 inc VAT. Information correct at time of going to press. Models subject to availability. Nissan Motor (GB) Ltd, The Rivers Office Park, Denham Way, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire WD3 9YS.

Fuel consumption figures for Nissan MICRA Range: CO₂ 125-115g/km – URBAN 42.2-46.3mpg/6.7-6.1L/100km – EXTRA URBAN 61.4-65.7mpg/4.6-4.3L/100km – COMBINED 52.3-56.5mpg/5.4-5.0L/100km.

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2010(10) NISSAN QASHQAI 5DR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 4000 miles.....	£17,995	2008(08) DAIHATSU SIRION SE 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 8000 miles.....	£7,995	2008(08) VAUXHALL ASTRA LIFE AC 140 ESTATE AUTO, SILVER, 14000 miles.....	£6,995
2010(60) VAUXHALL ZAFIRA ELITE CDTI 16V MPV AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 3000 miles.....	£16,995	2007(57) DAIHATSU SIRION SE 5DR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 9000 miles.....	£7,495	2007(57) VAUXHALL ASTRA DESIGN 140 ESTATE AUTO, PANNACOTTA, 15000 miles.....	£6,995
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2010(60) NISSAN CUBE KAIZEN 5DR HATCH AUTO, WHITE, 1000 miles.....	£12,995			2006(56) VAUXHALL ASTRA DESIGN 16V ESTATE AUTO, PANACOTTA, 16000 miles.....	£6,495
2010(60) FORD FIESTA TITANIUM 5DR HATCH AUTO, RED, 2000 miles.....	£12,995			2006(56) VAUXHALL ASTRA LIFE AC 16V ESTATE AUTO, BLACK, 11000 miles.....	£5,995
2010(60) PEUGEOT 308 5DR HATCH AUTO, ABYSS BLUE, 750 miles.....	£10,995				
2009(09) FORD FOCUS ZETEC 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 3000 miles.....	£10,995				
2010(10) VAUXHALL MERIVA DESIGN 16V MPV AUTO, BLUE, 1000 miles.....	£10,995				
2010(10) VAUXHALL CORSA SE 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 1000 miles.....	£10,995				
2010(10) VAUXHALL CORSA EXCLUSIV AC 5DR HATCH AUTO, GOLD, 6000 miles.....	£9,995				
2010(10) RENAULT GRAND MODUS DYNAMIQUE VVT 16V 5DR HATCH AUTO, OTTOMON BLUE, 1000 miles.....	£9,995				
2009(59) NISSAN NOTE VISA MPV AUTO, GREY, 1800 miles.....	£9,995				
2010(10) RENAULT KANGOO EXPRESSION 16V MPV AUTO, BLUE, 1800 miles.....	£9,995				
2010(60) RENAULT MODUS GRAND DYNAMIQUE VVT 16V 5DR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 250 miles.....	£9,995				
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2010(10) PEUGEOT 207 16V 5DR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 7000 miles.....	£9,495				
2010(10) FORD FIESTA EVO DYNAMIC DUALOGIC 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 500 miles.....	£9,495				
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2009(09) MERCEDES-BENZ CLK CLK200 KOMPRESSOR AVANTGARDE CONVERTIBLE AUTO, BLACK, 20000 miles.....	£23,995	2009(59) BMW 3 SERIES 320i SE COUPE AUTO, BRONZE, 4000 miles.....	£19,995	2009(09) VAUXHALL ZAFIRA EXCLUSIV CDTI 16V MPV AUTO, GREEN, 7000 miles.....	£12,995
2007(57) PEUGEOT 307 S COUPE CABRIOLET COUPE AUTO, BLACK, 1500 miles.....	£9,995	2007(56) FIAT PANDA ELEGANZA 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 25000 miles.....	£4,995	2010(10) VAUXHALL MERIVA DESIGN 16V MPV AUTO, BLUE, 1000 miles.....	£10,995
2009(58) NISSAN MICRA 25 CONVERTIBLE CC AUTO, RED, 11000 miles.....	£9,995			2008(08) VAUXHALL ASTRA LIFE 16V MPV AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 12000 miles.....	£8,995
2006(56) RENAULT MEGANE PRIVILEGE VVT 111 CONVERTIBLE AUTO, BLUE, 14000 miles.....	£8,995			2009(09) VAUXHALL ZAFIRA LIFE 16V MPV AUTO, TURQUOISE, 13000 miles.....	£7,995
2006(06) RENAULT MEGANE DYNAMIQUE VVT 111 CONVERTIBLE AUTO, BLUE, 21000 miles.....	£7,995			2007(57) VAUXHALL ZAFIRA LIFE 16V MPV AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 14000 miles.....	£7,995
2006(56) RENAULT MEGANE PRIVILEGE VVT 111 CONVERTIBLE AUTO, GOLD, 30000 miles.....	£7,995			2007(57) VAUXHALL ZAFIRA LIFE 16V MPV AUTO, BLUE, 9000 miles.....	£7,995
FIESTA					
2010(60) FORD FIESTA TITANIUM 5DR HATCH AUTO, RED, 2000 miles.....	£12,995			2007(07) VAUXHALL MERIVA 16V MPV AUTO, BLUE, 19000 miles.....	£6,995
2010(60) FORD FIESTA TITANIUM 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 2000 miles.....	£11,995			2008(58) CHEVROLET MATIZ SE 5DR HATCH AUTO, GREEN, 7000 miles.....	£5,995
2009(58) FORD FIESTA STYLE PLUS 3DR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 3000 miles.....	£8,995			2004(54) VAUXHALL ZAFIRA LIFE 16V MPV AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 78000 miles.....	£3,995
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2008(58) FORD FOCUS STYLE 5DR HATCH AUTO, RED, 3000 miles.....	£9,995			2007(57) PEUGEOT 307 S COUPE CABRIOLET COUPE AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 8000 miles.....	£9,995
2008(08) FORD FOCUS ZETEC 5DR HATCH AUTO, GREEN, 4000 miles.....	£8,995			2010(10) PEUGEOT 207 S 16V 5DR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 7000 miles.....	£9,495
2008(57) FORD FOCUS STYLE 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 7000 miles.....	£7,995			2008(08) PEUGEOT 307 SW SE ESTATE AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 8000 miles.....	£8,995
2007(57) FORD FOCUS ZETEC CLIMATE 16V 5DR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 19000 miles.....	£6,995			2007(57) PEUGEOT 207 SPORT 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 2000 miles.....	£7,995
2005(55) FORD FOCUS GHIA 16V 5DR HATCH AUTO, GREY, 27000 miles.....	£6,495			2007(57) PEUGEOT 307 S 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 18000 miles.....	£6,995
2007(57) FORD FOCUS ZETEC CLIMATE 16V 5DR HATCH AUTO, TONIC BLUE, 21000 miles.....	£5,995				
FOCUS ESTATES				MITSUBISHI	
2007(57) FORD FOCUS STYLE ESTATE AUTO, GREY, 12000 miles.....	£6,495			2007(57) MITSUBISHI LANCER ELEGANCE ESTATE AUTO, GREY, 19000 miles.....	£6,995
RENAULT SCENIC				HONDA	
2009(59) RENAULT GRAND SCENIC DYNAMIQUE DCI FAB TURBO MPV AUTO, BLUE, 6000 miles.....	£16,995			2007(07) HONDA CR-V i-VTEC ES 5DR HATCH AUTO 4x4, GREY, 24000 miles.....	£17,995
2007(07) RENAULT GRAND SCENIC DYNAMIQUE VVT 136 7STR MPV AUTO, BLUE, 8000 miles.....	£8,995			2007(07) HONDA CR-V i-VTEC SE 5DR HATCH AUTO 4x4, GREY, 15000 miles.....	£15,995
2007(07) RENAULT GRAND SCENIC PRIVILEGE VVT 136 7STR MPV AUTO, BLACK, 15000 miles.....	£8,995			2006(05) HONDA CR-V i-VTEC SE ESTATE AUTO 4x4, BLACK, 26000 miles.....	£11,995
2007(07) RENAULT SCENIC PRIVILEGE VVT 111 5STR MPV AUTO, RED, 13000 miles.....	£7,995			2009(09) HONDA JAZZ DSi SE 5DR HATCH AUTO, RED, 3000 miles.....	£10,995
2007(07) RENAULT SCENIC PRIVILEGE VVT 111 5STR MPV AUTO, GREY, 10000 miles.....	£7,995			2008(58) HONDA JAZZ DSi SE 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 9000 miles.....	£10,495
2007(07) RENAULT SCENIC PRIVILEGE VVT 111 5STR MPV AUTO, GREY, 26000 miles.....	£7,995			2007(07) HONDA JAZZ DSi SE 5DR HATCH AUTO, RED, 8000 miles.....	£8,995
2008(57) RENAULT SCENIC PRIVILEGE VVT 111 5STR MPV AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 20000 miles.....	£7,995			2004(54) HONDA JAZZ DSi SE 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 18000 miles.....	£6,495
2008(57) RENAULT SCENIC DYNAMIQUE VVT 111 5STR MPV AUTO, BLUE, 19000 miles.....	£6,995			2005(04) HONDA JAZZ DSi SE 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 33000 miles.....	£5,995
2004(54) RENAULT SCENIC DYNAMIQUE 16V MPV AUTO, BLACK, 27000 miles.....	£5,495			2003(03) HONDA CIVIC SE EXECUTIVE 5DR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 49000 miles.....	£4,995
RENAULT				MERCEDES	
2007(57) RENAULT MEGANE PRIVILEGE VVT 136 CONVERTIBLE AUTO, GOLD, 12000 miles.....	£10,995			2009(09) MERCEDES-BENZ CLK CLK200 KOMPRESSOR AVANTGARDE CONVERTIBLE AUTO, BLACK, 20000 miles.....	£23,995
2010(10) RENAULT KANGOO EXPRESSION 16V MPV AUTO, BLUE, 1800 miles.....	£9,995			2007(57) MERCEDES-BENZ C CLASS C180K AVANTGARDE SE SALOON AUTO, CUBANITE SILVER, 23000 miles.....	£13,995
2010(10) RENAULT MODUS GRAND DYNAMIQUE VVT 16V 5DR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 250 miles.....	£9,995			2008(58) MERCEDES-BENZ C CLASS A170 AVANTGARDE SE 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 16000 miles.....	£13,995
2006(56) RENAULT MEGANE PRIVILEGE VVT 111 CONVERTIBLE AUTO, BLUE, 14000 miles.....	£8,995			2007(10) MERCEDES-BENZ A CLASS A160 CLASSIC SE 5DR HATCH AUTO, MOUNTAIN GREY, 1610 miles.....	£13,995
2008(08) RENAULT GRAND SCENIC DYNAMIQUE VVT 136 7STR MPV AUTO, GREEN, 15000 miles.....	£8,995			2008(58) MERCEDES-BENZ A CLASS A170 CLASSIC SE 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 6000 miles.....	£10,995
2006(56) RENAULT MEGANE PRIVILEGE VVT 111 CONVERTIBLE AUTO, GOLD, 30000 miles.....	£7,995			2007(57) MERCEDES-BENZ A CLASS A150 CLASSIC SE 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 5000 miles.....	£9,995
2007(07) RENAULT SCENIC DYNAMIQUE VVT 111 5STR MPV AUTO, GREY, 10000 miles.....	£7,995			2007(57) MERCEDES-BENZ A CLASS A150 CLASSIC SE 5DR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 6000 miles.....	£9,995
2007(07) RENAULT SCENIC DYNAMIQUE VVT 111 5STR MPV AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 20000 miles.....	£6,995			2007(56) MERCEDES-BENZ A CLASS A150 CLASSIC SE 5DR HATCH AUTO, GREY, 12000 miles.....	£8,995
2004(54) RENAULT KANGOO EXPRESSION 16V MPV AUTO, GREEN, 39000 miles.....	£3,995			2002(02) MERCEDES-BENZ SLK SLK230 KOMPRESSOR CONVERTIBLE AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 38000 miles.....	£7,995
CHEVROLET				VOLKSWAGEN	
2008(08) CHEVROLET LACETTI SX 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 6000 miles.....	£6,495			2008(57) VOLKSWAGEN GOLF MATCH FSI 115 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 17000 miles.....	£11,995
2008(08) CHEVROLET AVEO LT 5DR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 999 miles.....	£6,495			2007(57) VOLKSWAGEN JETTA S TDI 170 SALOON AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 19000 miles.....	£9,995
2009(09) CHEVROLET LACETTI SX 5DR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 3000 miles.....	£6,495			2007(07) VOLKSWAGEN GOLF S 5DR HATCH AUTO, GREY, 17000 miles.....	£9,995
2009(08) CHEVROLET LACETTI SX 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 9000 miles.....	£6,495			2006(06) VOLKSWAGEN GOLF SE 5DR HATCH AUTO, GREY, 5000 miles.....	£9,995
2009(09) CHEVROLET MATIZ SE 5DR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 1100 miles.....	£6,495			2007(57) VOLKSWAGEN GOLF S 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 16000 miles.....	£9,995
2008(57) CHEVROLET KALOS SX 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 21000 miles.....	£5,495			2008(58) VOLKSWAGEN POLO MATCH 3DR AUTO, BLACK, 12000 miles.....	£8,995
2007(07) CHEVROLET MATIZ SE 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 18000 miles.....	£4,495			2007(07) VOLKSWAGEN POLO S 5DR HATCH AUTO, GREY, 13000 miles.....	£7,995
2007(07) CHEVROLET MATIZ SE 5DR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 8000 miles.....	£4,495			2007(57) VOLKSWAGEN POLO S 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 18000 miles.....	£7,995
2007(07) CHEVROLET MATIZ SE 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 20000 miles.....	£4,495			2007(07) VOLKSWAGEN POLO S 5DR HATCH AUTO, REFLEX SILVER, 16000 miles.....	£7,495
HONDA					
2005(05) NISSAN MICRA 25 CONVERTIBLE CC CONVERTIBLE AUTO, RED, 11000 miles.....	£6,495			2003(53) VOLKSWAGEN GOLF SE 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 54000 miles.....	£4,995
2005(05) NISSAN MICRA 25 CONVERTIBLE CC CONVERTIBLE AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 6000 miles.....	£6,495				
2009(09) NISSAN NOTE VISA MPV AUTO, GREY, 1800 miles.....	£9,995				
2009(09) NISSAN MICRA ACENTA 5DR HATCH AUTO, RED, 7000 miles.....	£8,495			DIESEL AUTOMATICS	
2010(10) NISSAN MICRA ACENTA 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 8000 miles.....	£8,495			2008(58) NISSAN QASHQAI TEKNA 4WD 5DR TD HATCH AUTO 4x4, CAFFE LATTE, 11000 miles.....	£19,995
2009(09) NISSAN MICRA ACENTA 5DR HATCH AUTO, RED, 18000 miles.....	£6,495			2009(09) RENAULT GRAND SCENIC DCI 16V TURBO MPV AUTO, BLUE, 6000 miles.....	£16,995
2007(57) NISSAN MICRA ACENTA 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 12000 miles.....	£6,495			2010(60) VAUXHALL ZAFIRA ELITE CDTI 16V MPV AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 3000 miles.....	£16,995
2007(07) NISSAN MICRA ACENTA 5DR HATCH AUTO, RED, 18000 miles.....	£6,495			2009(09) VAUXHALL ZAFIRA EXCLUSIV CDTI 16V MPV AUTO, GREEN, 7000 miles.....	£12,995
2007(07) NISSAN MICRA ACENTA 5DR HATCH AUTO, RED, 12000 miles.....	£6,495				
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2010(10) VAUXHALL ASTRA ELITE 5DR HATCH AUTO, GREEN, 950 miles.....	£15,995			2006(06) JAGUAR X-TYPE S D 50 SALOON, RED, 27000 miles.....	£7,995
2009(59) VAUXHALL ASTRA ELITE 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 8000 miles.....	£11,995			2007(57) VAUXHALL MERIVA ENERGY CDTI 16V MPV, BLACK, 24000 miles.....	£6,995
2010(10) VAUXHALL ASTRA DESIGN 16V E 4DR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 12000 miles.....	£9,495			2008(08) HYUNDAI TWINGO DYNAMIQUE 3DR HATCH, ORANGE, 35000 miles.....	£5,995
2009(59) VAUXHALL ASTRA DESIGN 16V E 4DR HATCH AUTO, GREY, 5000 miles.....	£9,495			2006(06) VAUXHALL CORSA DESIGN 16V TWINTOP 3DR HATCH, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 20000 miles.....	£5,495
2009(09) VAUXHALL ASTRA DESIGN 16V E 4DR HATCH AUTO, SILVER LIGHTNING, 14000 miles.....	£8,995			2004(04) PEUGEOT 206 SE 5DR HATCH, BLACK, 25000 miles.....	£5,495
2009(09) VAUXHALL ASTRA DESIGN 16V E 4DR HATCH AUTO, GREEN, 2000 miles.....	£8,995			2006(06) FORD FIESTA GHIA 16V 5DR HATCH, MAUVE, 35000 miles.....	£5,495
2009(58) VAUXHALL ASTRA DESIGN 16V E 4DR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 8000 miles.....	£8,495			2007(07) FIAT PANDA DYNAMIC 5DR HATCH, GREY, 8000 miles.....	£4,995
2009(08) VAUXHALL ASTRA DESIGN 16V E 4DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 30000 miles.....	£8,495			2007(07) KIA PICANTO LS 5DR HATCH, BLUE, 17000 miles.....	£4,995
2008(58) VAUXHALL ASTRA LIFE 16V E 4DR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 11000 miles.....	£7,495			2	

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CAR OF THE WEEK

59 Plate. Skoda Octavia VRS 2.0 TDi

Finished in Black, 20,000 miles, £15,995

Used Cars

58 Plate. Skoda Octavia 2.0 TDI PD Elegance 5-Dr Hatchback

Finished in Black Magic Pearlescent with a Black Leather interior, 18,500 miles. £13,995

58 Plate. Skoda Octavia 2.0 TDI PD Elegance DSG 5-Dr Hatchback

Finished in Anthracite Grey Metallic with a Black Cloth interior, 19,200 miles. £12,995

08 Plate. Skoda Octavia 2.0 TDI PD Elegance 5-Dr Hatchback

Finished in Brilliant Silver Metallic, Leather Interior, 22,870 miles. £12,795

05 Plate. Skoda Octavia 2.0 TDI PD Ambiente 5-Dr Hatchback

Finished in Satin Grey Metallic with a Black Cloth interior, 47,800 miles. £6,995

07 Plate Skoda Octavia 2.0 TDI PD vRS 5-Dr Hatchback

Finished in Black Magic Metallic with a Multicolour Velour - Leather interior, 35,250 miles. £10,995

*Correct at time of going to press.



09 Plate. Skoda Fabia 2 1.2 HTP 12V (70 BHP) 5-Dr Estate

Finished in Grey Metallic with a Black Cloth interior, 10,700 miles. £8,995

08 Plate. Skoda Fabia 2 1.6 16V (105 BHP) 5-Dr Estate

Finished in Brilliant Silver Metallic with a Black Cloth interior, 27,250 miles. £8,795

08 Plate. Skoda Fabia 2 1.2 HTP 12V (70 BHP) 5-Dr Hatchback

Finished in Brilliant Silver Metallic with a Black Cloth interior, 14,900 miles. £7,495

08 Plate. Skoda Fabia 2 1.4 16V (85 BHP) 5-Dr Hatchback

Finished in Black Metallic Two Tone with a Black Cloth interior, 25,100 miles. £7,295

10 Plate. Skoda Fabia 1 1.2 HTP 6V (60 BHP) 5-Dr Hatchback

Finished in Dynamic Blue with a Grey Cloth interior, 9,500 miles. £6,995

07 Plate. Skoda Fabia 2 1.2 HTP 12V (70 BHP) 5-Dr Hatchback

Finished in Brilliant Silver Metallic, 22,500 miles. £6,995

58 Plate. Skoda Fabia 1 1.2 HTP 6V (60 BHP) 5-Dr Hatchback

Finished in Dynamic Blue with a Black Cloth interior, 13,200 miles. £6,495

57 Plate. Skoda Fabia 1.2 HTP Classic 5-Dr Estate

Finished in Graphite Grey Metallic with a Black Cloth interior, 39,500 miles. £5,995

56 Plate. Skoda Fabia 1.4 16V Ambiente 5-Dr Hatchback

Finished in Beige Metallic with a Black Cloth interior, 48,700 miles. £4,995

05 Plate. Skoda Fabia 1.4 16V Elegance (100 HP) 5-Dr Hatchback

Finished in Beige Metallic with a Black Cloth interior, 23,750 miles. £4,995

Other Makes

58 Plate. Fiat 500 1.3 MultiJet Sport 3-Dr Hatchback

Finished in Pasodoble Red with a Grey Velour - Leather interior, 27,100 miles. £9,795 **£8,995 OFFER**

04 Plate. Honda Civic 2.0 Type S 5-Dr Hatchback

Finished in Nighthawk Black, 48,500 miles. £5,795

04 Plate. Ford Galaxy 1.9 TDI Zetec (115 PS) 5-Dr MPV

Finished in Black Metallic with a Black Cloth interior, 10,510 miles. £5,795

08 Plate. Ford Ka 1.3 Zetec Climate 3-Dr Hatchback

Finished in Metallic Machine Silver, 12,500 miles. £4,995



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*VAT reduction equivalent to 20.0% VAT applied to the RRP including factory fitted optional extras on all Fabia, Roomster, petrol Octavia and petrol Superb new car retail orders taken before 31 March 2011. VAT is still applicable and will be shown on the customer invoice. Offers may be varied or withdrawn at anytime. Prices and specifications are accurate at time of print. Model shown varies from UK specification. Official fuel consumption in mpg (litres/100km) for the Skoda range: Urban 19.6 (14.4) – 68.9 (4.1), Extra Urban 36.2 (7.8) – 94.2 (3.0), Combined 27.7 (10.2) – 83.1 (3.4). CO2 emissions for the Skoda range 237 – 89g/km.

Skoda ditches cake baking in favour of snake making

DrivingReview

by STEVeloader

Skoda Fabia vRS

SKODA launched the current Fabia supermini with a compelling yet rather twee TV advert suggesting that carmaking is like making a cake.

This WI-inspired recipe was a tasty temptation for the Czech's brand's stereotypical customers: conservative, discerning and careful with money.

But the concoction wasn't ever going to work on people it hoped to persuade into the hot hatch Fabia vRS launched last year.

So the cake concept was turned on its head; instead of a bakery with workers in hygienic coats and hats, a new TV ad showed the vRS being shaped in a punkish Scrapheap Challenge-style metal shop with attitude and heavy music.

The magic ingredient? A snake for an engine. And is it all hype and froth? No.

The previous Fabia vRS was interesting and



SNAKE-POWERED: Skoda's latest ad campaign uses an engine made of snakes to highlight the potency of the new Fabia vRS engine

entertaining – unusually for this type of car, power came from a turbodiesel – but the new version is the real deal and still great value.

The latter especially so when considering all the technological abbreviations and acronyms squeezed into the vRS, notably the one and only but crowd-pleasing gearbox option: the VW group's fabulous twin-clutch DSG.

It offers a glimpse into a not too distant future when such clutch pedal-free installations may be standard; it is both a fully functioning seven-speed manual gearbox with swift and smooth

selection via stick or steering wheel paddles, or crisp yet smooth-shifting fully auto for when your snake-powered vRS is trapped in traffic.

With the lively 'twin-charger' supercharged and turbocharged 1.4-litre TSI engine turning out 180bhp, you also quickly take notice of another of the car's acronyms – XDS or electronic limited slip differential, designed to prevent the front driving wheels spinning themselves into a frenzy as they grapple with all that bhp.

Like most such gadgets, the XDS still can't



stop the vRS scrabbling on gravel or in slippery conditions, but it keeps the car sensible enough to enjoy and you quickly realise how this and the gearbox takes this latest vRS to a higher level.

The old car was quick and, unusually, used a turbodiesel to supply the fast take-off, but that 1.9-litre lump also made the Mark 1 vRS a bit ponderous. The snake-powered Mark 2, on the other hand, can dance along a winding road like a rattle, aided and abetted by that DSG 'box.

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The beauty of this pocket rocket though is its ability to do the sensible stuff when needed; the twin charger format delivers 0-62mph in just 7.3 seconds if needed, but real world motoring means the modest 1.4-litre engine can mostly amble around delivering an average mpg in the mid-40s.

And the car's ability to eat up roads when required does not come at the price of a taut suspension that nags even when you drive sedately; the vRS is perhaps one of the most comfortable hot hatches around and also comes with excellent sports-style seats.

Add all that to the five-seat van-like carrying capacity that comes as standard on the Mark 2 Fabia and this really is a hot hatch to please everyone.

And that includes the stingy, because vRS prices start at just £16,260.

Admittedly, the VW family has deployed the same formidable twin charger/DSG powertrain across a number of lively models and, most notably, in the £17,550 Seat Ibiza Cupra and the VW Polo GTI, which starts at £18,790 but will cost you £19,410 if you need to match the standard five-door practicality of Skoda's hooligan.

If you want an even bigger 'stow for go' factor you can also have the vRS estate version for £17,110, which still undercuts the three-door Cupra handsomely and makes the Polo looks downright extravagant.



Driving Portfolio

SKODA FABIA VRS £16,260

Driving appeal (out of five)	★★★★★
Image	★★★★
Space	★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Running costs	★★★★
Reliability	★★★★★
How green?	★★★
Road tax	£125/year
Best rival	VW Polo

The Verdict



DON'T LIKE:

the styling. Even the hot hatch trappings cannot disguise the 'oh so practical' Fabia profile.



NOT SURE:

the vRS is the ultimate hot hatch but...



REALLY LIKE:

how it allows you to have your cake and eat it, with a mix of performance and practicality.

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05 05 Renault Megane 1.9 Diesel 4DR

Light Met Green, 2 owners, sh, key card start up, alloy wheels, a/c, e/m, abs, e/m, alarm, CD, 27,120 miles, Dynamique 120 DCi £4,695



07 07 Fiat Panda 1.2 Dynamic 5DR

Black, 1 owner, sh, c/f, e/m, CD player, low ins, pas, black/orange cloth interior, radio/CD, inspection welcome, 23,978 miles £4,175



05 55 Vauxhall Combo Van 1.3 CDTi

White 1 owner, 1248cc, diesel, grey cloth int, c/f, imm, remote driver air bag, pas, sh, side door loading, 53,500 miles £3,750



07 07 Chevrolet Matiz SE 995cc

5dr hatchback, 2 owners from new, grey cloth int, abs, remote c/f, e/w, pas, CD, fsh, low tax/in, inspection welcome, 23,506 miles £3,475



04 04 Peugeot 206 s 1.4

5 dr hatchback, 1 owner, black/grey int, a/c, remote c/f, e/w, fsh, radio/cd, imm, colour coded mirrors, 55,000 miles £3,395



03 03 Ford Streetka 8V Luxury Convertible

2 dr, Met blue with black hood, black leather int, alloy wheels, sh, a/c, front fog lamps, 1.6, 50,899 miles £2,995



96 P 900 Saab SE Turbo Convertible

White with black power hood, leather int, 2 owners, alloy wheels, remote c/f, al, sh, only 50,128 miles £2,695



01 Y Peugeot 607 SE Auto

2 Owners, leather int, lumber support, alloy wheels, pas, c/contol, fsh, abs, heated seats, park distance control, elec rear sunbird, 77,200 miles £2,595



03 03 Fiat Punto 1.2 Sport

2 Owners, dark grey sport cloth int, fsh, alloy wheels, c/locking, e/w, cd, abs spoilers, front fog lamps, sport model, ideal first car 84,800 miles £2,495



01 51 Peugeot 406 LX 16v 1749cc

4dr saloon, green with grey velour int, a/c, alarm, imm, c/f, e/w, pas, part exchange to clear, mat & taxed, 95,500 miles £1,250



98 R Alfa Romeo 145 Cloverleaf

2 owners, alloy wheels colour coded mirrors, tinted glass, cd, alarm, imm, c/locking, e/w/m, pas, sh, sport model, 12 mths MOT £1,195



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11

New registration special feature

Making the case for a new motor

SUPERB EFFORT: Skoda's aptly named Superb range offers executive brand luxury at a mainstream price



By STEVE LOADER

SALES of new cars rose by nearly two per cent in 2010 – not bad considering that the UK economy is shaky.

Admittedly, the car industry is still braced for an expected fall of five per cent during 2011 – partly prompted by the VAT rise last month – but the fact that sales are not in freefall underlines why so many people still want a new car.

For a start, not many buyers see moving house as an option: the housing market is flat and if they are in a steady job, they don't want to jeopardise that by opting for another post elsewhere.

And if they also have cash in the bank, they know it's earning little interest at a time when there are big savings to be had on a new car, thanks to carmakers and forecourts desperate to deal, and new fuel-saving economies on the vehicles themselves.

There is a new realism about list prices anyway as manufacturers recognise that



FEEL-GOOD FACTOR: Mazda's MX-5 remains a popular buy even in tough times

these fairy tale figures put off private buyers, thereby outweighing their intended benefit: to convince fleet buyers of fantastic bulk buy discounts and also to give dealers room to manoeuvre on deals and part exchanges.

Other buyer incentives out there in a tough market include attractive packages on finance – which banks simply won't match – insurance and servicing.

There are also outstanding warranties

Petrol power is also battling back against diesel, particularly lower down the market.

The fuel itself is set to stay cheaper than diesel simply because oil refining capacity is geared more to the former.

Petrol engines also cost less to buy upfront and are lighter, and while they still cannot compete on economy with diesels, it is the savings elsewhere that quietly add up: less wear and tear on tyres and front end mechanicals.

Diesels may have won over many sceptics with their good low down power delivery, but small and efficient turbocharged petrol units are making a difference here now and, with the nimbleness of petrol power, make for more entertaining driving.

Petrol engine emissions are also being lowered steadily so their road tax and emissions credentials are far better.

Factor in all of the above and the sums start to add up on ditching something dated and less efficient in favour of a modern and more eco-friendly model.

• **For more on '11 New Reg' trends and buying tips, see inside.**

Buyers find small is beautiful

by
STEVE LOADER

DOWNSIZING continues to be the UK motor market's buzzword.

Some 20 years ago, the family saloon/company car sector was dominant, largely thanks to the company car culture where big and brash was beautiful.

Then came the rise of the family hatchback and supermini; throughout the Nineties and early Noughties they had a ding-dong battle for market leadership.

However, helped by soaring fuel and insurance costs, greater environmental awareness and then by Government legislation via punitive road tax on larger cars, ever more stylish superminis have gained well over 40 per cent of sales if you include the even smaller city car segment – family hatchbacks had to settle for the No2 spot with around 25 per cent of registrations.

Crossover

More difficult to quantify though is the trend towards 'crossovers' – cars like the Nissan Qashqai, Skoda Yeti and Peugeot 3008.

As the name implies they straddle several sectors including family hatchback, MPV (multi-purpose vehicle) or people carrier and SUV (Sports Utility Vehicle) and are hard to pigeonhole under the current classification system.

Many manufacturers have already tried to apply the sexy new crossover label to what would once have been their SUV models – especially as the 4x4/SUV sector has declined – and we can expect an industry



SMALLER AND LEANER: One of the UK's supermini best sellers, the Vauxhall Corsa, is also available in fuel-sipping Ecoflex form



STILL KING? Honda's pioneering Jazz remains the benchmark in the mini MPV sector

reappraisal of how classes are defined and counted.

This could then show a burgeoning third sector comprising the new-age crossover designs.

In the meantime, registration figures from motor industry mouthpiece, the SMMT, show how superminis (S) and family hatchbacks (H) rule the UK top 10:

- 1) Ford Fiesta (S)
- 2) Vauxhall Astra(H)
- 3) Ford Focus (H)
- 4) Vauxhall Corsa (S)
- 5) VW Golf (H)
- 6) VW Polo (S)
- 7) Peugeot 207 (H)
- 8) BMW 3-Series
- 9) Mini (H)
- 10) Nissan Qashqai



VERSATILE: Toyota's Verso MPV offers seven seats within a compact yet spacious body

Fuel consumption figures for Saab 9-3 Diesel Saloon Range in mpg (litres/100km): Urban 36.7 – 49.6 (7.7 – 5.7), Extra-urban 60.1 – 72.4 (4.7 – 3.9), Combined 48.7 – 62.8 (5.8 – 4.5). CO₂ emissions 153 – 119g/km.

Offer available to business users for orders received by 31.03.11. £294 monthly figure is based on a 9-3 Turbo Edition Saloon 1.9TTiD (180PS) Manual on a non-maintenance contract hire package over 36 months, 10,000 contract miles per year. Advance payment equal to 3 monthly payments is payable followed by 35 monthly payments. Excess mileage charge applies if contract mileage is exceeded. For full terms and conditions and specification please refer to the Saab Great Britain Limited Master Agreement and your local dealer. All quotations are subject to availability, status and agreement. Free metallic paint is only available in conjunction with the Saab Great Britain Limited offer and applies to selected models only. Guarantees may be required. Terms are unavailable to existing customers under specific end-user terms with Saab Great Britain Limited. Details correct at time of publication and may vary, eg if list price changes. Saab Great Britain Limited does not offer tax advice to individuals: company car drivers should consult their accountant on their tax position. Contract hire by ALD Automotive Ltd., trading as Saab Contract Hire, Oakwood Park, Lodge Causeway, Fishponds, Bristol BS16 3JA. On the road prices include number plates, delivery, Road Fund Licence, first registration fee and VAT. Excludes fuel and insurance. Model shown is a 9-3 Turbo Edition Saloon 1.9TTiD (180PS) Manual at £23,484.79 OTR with optional metallic paint at £536.17 and TX Design Pack at £607.66. ^{**}119g/km CO₂ emissions relates to MY11 9-3 manual Saloon engines only and excludes the 1.9TTiD (180PS) Aero model. [†]Exempt from first years road tax.

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*VAT reduction equivalent to 20.0% VAT applied to the RRP including factory fitted optional extras on all Fabia, Roomster, petrol Octavia and petrol Superb new car retail orders taken before 31st March 2011. VAT is still applicable and will be shown on the customer invoice. Offers may be varied or withdrawn at anytime. Prices and specifications are accurate at time of print. Model shown varies from UK specification.

Official fuel consumption in mpg (litres/100km) for the Škoda range: Urban 19.6 (14.4) – 68.9 (4.1), Extra Urban 36.2 (7.8) – 94.2 (3.0), Combined 27.7 (10.2) – 83.1 (3.4). CO₂ emissions for the Škoda range 237 – 89g/km.

by
STEVELOADER

GLOBAL warming and care for the environment has created a need for leaner and meaner models.

New road tax bandings, ranging from zero to £950 a year for gas guzzling limos or 4x4s, are changing our car buying habits too.

Of course, anyone spending £50,000-100,000 on a new motor won't worry about small change like that, but most people like saving a few quid there and through the improved economy of greener cars, while incidentally doing their bit for the environment.

Longer term, electric cars may be the answer and there has been lots of publicity about 'plug-in' models for overnight charging at home or city centre charging points.

But battery technology has some catching up to do and the zero emissions argument is misleading. Until we have zero emission power stations, electric cars simply transfer the CO₂ and noxious gas output from exhaust pipe to belching chimney.

Refinement

Are hybrids the answer then? Japanese giants Toyota and Honda lead here, pairing conventional engines with electric power and batteries.

However, hybrids are expensive to buy and the economy at motorway speeds is no better than a frugal diesel.

And so we return to the internal combustion 'ump' where emissions are plummeting, economy is soaring and refinement is improving.

In fact, things are moving so fast that you marvel at what a few legislative kicks up the backside have achieved.

The downsizing phenomenon is well under way too, with several new cars proving that 'small is beautiful'.

Most carmakers also now have an 'eco' sub-

It's a leaner, meaner market out there



SMOOTH: Honda's British-built CR-V diesel shows that 4x4s don't have to be gas guzzlers



NEWLY-LAUNCHED: Citroën's latest C4 family hatchback does 'lean and mean' in style



POPULAR: Mazda3 highlights how the Japanese marque has sought better fuel economy and lower emissions through lightness and clever design

brand such as Vauxhall's Ecoflex, Skoda's Greenline, and Seat's Ecomotive.

But they often don't come cheap, so weigh potential long-term savings against upfront

cost – if you don't cover the miles, conventional alternatives may be a better bet.

Don't ignore petrol models either; the higher price of diesel cars and the fuel at the pumps

must be compared with new small capacity low emission/consumption petrol engines such as the turbocharged 1.4-litre units found in the Skoda and Seat ranges.

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Models shown AYGO Go! 1.0 VVT-i 3 door manual £8,995. Metallic paint £418.72 extra. [†]Price is calculated by deducting £555 customer saving and £200 Centre contribution from the manufacturer's list price of £9,750 and is correct at time of going to press. Yaris T Spirit 1.0 VVT-i 3 door manual £10,995. Metallic paint £418.72 extra. [#]Price is calculated by deducting £1,500 customer saving and £200 Centre contribution from manufacturer's list price of £12,695 and is correct at time of going to press. Includes VAT, delivery charge, number plates, 1 year's road fund licence & £55 first registration fee. Subject to availability. Only available for new retail orders of models shown between 16 December and 31 March 2011 and registered before 30 June 2011. 5 year/100,000 mile manufacturer's warranty is subject to terms and conditions, including requirement that servicing of vehicle in accordance with the standard Toyota service schedule for the full 5 year period. *Free servicing offer and 6.9% APR only available for new retail orders of models shown between 16 December and 31 March 2011 and registered and financed through Toyota Financial Services, Great Burgh, Burgh Heath, Epsom, Surrey, KT18 5UZ, before 30 June 2011 on a 3 year AccessToyota (PCP) plan. Indemnities may be required. Finance subject to status over 18s. Free servicing offer includes the first three scheduled services at an official Toyota Centre (every 10,000 miles or 12 months whichever is first). Terms and conditions apply. Toyota Centres are independent of Toyota Financial Services.

AYGO Go! 1.0 VVT-i 3 door manual Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (1/100km): Urban 51.4 (5.5), Extra Urban 70.6 (4.0), Combined 61.4 (4.6). CO₂ Emissions 105g/km.
Yaris T Spirit 1.0 VVT-i 3 door manual Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (1/100km): Urban 45.6 (6.2), Extra Urban 61.4 (4.6), Combined 55.4 (5.1). CO₂ Emissions 118g/km.

Vito is better than ever



REVAMP: Mercedes-Benz has given its big-selling panel van an overhaul that is more practical and kinder to the environment

TOUGH, indestructible and dependable – day-in, day-out, the Mercedes-Benz Vito applies itself uncomplainingly to the rigours of the tasks on hand.

This is a van that knows its business: Mercedes-Benz has undertaken a comprehensive revamp of its big-selling panel van, which is more economical and kinder on the environment, yet more practical and more dynamic.

New engines and new transmissions reduce emissions and fuel consumption by up to 15 percent while enhancing performance.

The fully reconfigured chassis is tailored

to the transportation of goods or passengers, according to the model concerned. The driver's workplace in all models and the passenger compartment of the Vito Traveliner are more attractively appointed than ever too.

Robustness

The new Mercedes Vito is readily recognisable by its new 'face', combining the style of the current passenger cars from Mercedes-Benz with the robustness of a commercial vehicle.

The central innovation in the latest Vito is a completely new drive offering particularly economical and environmentally friendly operation. All engines com-

ply with the Euro 5 emissions standard.

Fuel consumption has fallen markedly once again, accompanied by cuts of up to 15 percent in CO₂ emissions, depending on the engine variant. Further reductions in fuel consumption and emissions are possible with the BlueEfficiency models.

This innovative package, which is available for the Vito panel van and comes as standard for the Vito Traveliner, is a unique offering in the van market.

The new four-cylinder engines rated at 95hp in the Vito 110 CDI, 136hp in the Vito 113 CDI and 163hp in the Vito 116 CDI are provided with balancer shafts for impressively smooth running.

All diesel engines are equipped with an oxidation catalytic converter, a particulate filter and cooled exhaust gas recirculation.

The new ECO Gear six-speed manual transmission for all four-cylinder models offers a broad gear ratio spread for optimum performance and enables low fuel consumption and emission levels.

Top of the range among the diesel engines is the V6 in the Vito 122 CDI, which combines smooth running with impressive output and high tractive power. With a power output of 224hp, it now offers even better performance, while combining economy with environment-friendliness.

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Fuel consumption figures mpg (litres/100km) and CO₂ emissions (g/km). New Corsa Excite 1.0i 12v ecoFLEX. Urban: 44.8 (6.3), Extra-urban: 67.3 (4.2), Combined: 56.5 (5.0). CO₂ emissions: 117g/km.

*Offer available to individuals for orders received between 01.02.11 and 31.03.11. Figures based on a non-maintenance contract hire package over 48 months and 6,000 miles per year (max). An advance rental of £567 is payable, then 47 monthly rentals of £189. Rentals and excess charges are based on the current VAT rate. An excess charge of up to 6.38 ppm will be applied for mileage in excess of 6,000 mile p.a. Excess charges also apply if the car is not serviced and maintained in accordance with manufacturer guidelines and returned to Vauxhall Leasing in a condition commensurate with the BVRLA Fair Wear & Tear guidelines for its age and mileage. Package includes R.F.L. and Vauxhall Assistance. Offer subject to availability and status. UK supplied vehicles only. For full specification, details, terms and conditions contact your local retailer. Guarantee and/or indemnity may be required. Applicants must be 18 or over. Details correct at time of publication and may vary, e.g. if list price changes. Personal contract hire by ALD Automotive Ltd., trading as Vauxhall Leasing, Oakwood Park, Lodge Causeway, Fishponds, Bristol BS16 3JA. (Vaux106446)

A white Mazda 2 Tamura hatchback is shown in the center, angled slightly to the left. The background features a dynamic, blurred green and blue light effect, suggesting speed. In the top left corner, the Mazda logo is displayed within a white diamond shape, with the text 'Mazda 2 TAMURA' and 'zoom zoom' in a stylized font above it. On the right side of the image, the text 'HAVE IT ALL' is written in large, bold, white letters, followed by 'At Canterbury Mazda' in a smaller white font. Below this, a list of promotional offers is listed in white text: 'VAT FIXED AT 2010 RATE^', '£750 deposit contribution^^', '3 years' complimentary servicing**', 'Low deposit and low monthly payments', 'Representative 3.9% APR*', '16" sports alloy wheels', 'Full sports body kit', and the final price '£12,004.69'.

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The official fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km) for the upgraded Mazda2 range: Urban 34.9 (8.1) - 56.5 (5.0), Extra Urban 53.3 (5.3) - 76.3 (3.7), Combined 44.8 (6.3) - 67.3 (4.2). CO₂ emissions (g/km) 146 - 110.

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fuel consumption in MPG (l/100km) for Hyundai range: Urban 25.9 (10.9) - 61.4 (4.6), Extra Urban 39.8 (7.1) - 74.3 (3.8), Combined 33.2 (8.5) - 67.3 (4.2) CO₂ Emissions 225 - 110 g/km.

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FIGURES from the Motor Cycle Industry Association (MCI) show that sales of motorcycles and mopeds in the first month of the year rose notably against those at this time last year.

Total registrations of all powered-two wheelers went up by 25.5 per cent compared to January 2010 – splitting the figure further shows motorcycle sales growing 29.2 per cent and mopeds by 10.6 per cent.

It underlines how, despite UK economic difficulties, people are continuing to take to two wheels for pleasure as well as practical and economical reasons – industry watchers point to a trend emerging towards everyday commuter machines.

The entry-level sector of machines with a engine capacity of 50cc-125cc has seen the biggest growth of 44.5 per cent, a clear indicator that the industry's Get On campaign is continuing to take effect.

The three top growth areas by sector are Adventure Sport (52 per cent), Scooter (43 per cent) and Supersport (41.5 per cent). Scooter style motorcycles accounted for the highest number of registrations in January (958 machines) followed by the Naked (stripped back non-fairing) sector (732).

MCI chief executive Steve Kenward said: "Time wasted in congestion and the massive costs of car ownership, especially for younger people looking to get insured on a car, make a powered-two wheeler increasingly attractive.

"A motorcycle or scooter is a real and viable alternative to a car, or public transport, and can cut journey times, is easier to park, costs less to run and helps reduce CO2 emissions. It makes more sense than ever for people to consider making the switch to this mode of transport."

For people who don't have a licence, but are thinking about giving two-wheels a go, the industry is also making it easier for people to try out biking for free with a local training school.

For more information about the Get On campaign or to sign up for a free one-hour ride go to www.geton.co.uk.

Early acceleration for the motorcycle sector



SUPER HERO: Suzuki's all-new GSX-R600 has been hailed as the new king of the Supersport class. Redesigned from the ground-up, the new version has shed an incredible nine kilos compared to the 2010 model

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Court ruling to have impact on insurance

Q I have just passed my driving test but have not yet got my own car. My mother has added me to her insurance, so I can drive her car, but she was advised to sort out my own insurance as quickly as possible because new laws will increase women's premiums. Is this true? **KL**

A Yes, this is true – probably! Everything depends on a European Court decision that is expected next week, on Friday. A consumer group in Belgium wants the court to rule that it is illegal to charge men and women different insurance premiums, and it looks as though the judge will agree. If he does, the results will be enormous and the ripples will spread far wider than just motoring policies. Young women drivers have far fewer accidents than young men, so pay less for their insurance. The AA says women's premiums can be as much as 50pc cheaper, and could increase substantially immediately the judgment is enforced. There is no way of knowing whether the court's decision will apply at once or at a date to be set in the future, but you could be looking at paying an extra £1,000 a year.

At the other end of the age scale, people approaching retirement may be badly hit. Men die younger than women, so a man with a private pension plan gets more than a woman of the same age, because her pension will typically last four or five years longer. If this is outlawed, a man retiring next month could see his pension crash by about 10pc. I suppose there is always a chance that Parliament will stand up to the European Court.

MPs recently voted down European plans to give prisoners the vote, so perhaps they will also come to the rescue of young women drivers and men approaching retirement.

Q Tesco Bank is offering 5.2pc interest. Is this the same as the supermarket company, or is it a different firm? Is the account safe? **PD**

A Tesco Bank really is part of the huge supermarket group. But its highest interest rate on savings account is 3.75pc.

What you have heard about is a "corporate bond", or IOU. You lend Tesco Bank £2,000 upwards, and the bank will pay annual interest of 5.2pc until 2018, when your bond will be repaid in full.

Meanwhile, those bonds are traded on the stock market, with the price rising or falling each day.

It is very unlikely that anything will go wrong with a company so big, but if disaster did strike, your bond would not be protected by the official compensation scheme that rescues savers, because it is a stock market investment and not a bank account.

Only you can decide whether you can lock your money away, possibly for as long as seven years.

TONY HETHERINGTON
MONEY CLINIC



Q Our bank statement showed a direct debit payment to the power company Eon, but we do not use Eon. I told the bank, and the money was returned to our account immediately, but how did Eon get our details in the first place? **LH**

A Direct debit rules say your bank must replace the money as soon as you say that a payment was not authorised, so top marks to your bank for doing just that. My guess is that Eon's bank meant to take a payment from someone else's account and someone typed in your account details by mistake. Just one incorrect figure could have meant that you paid someone else's gas or electric bill. This is one more reason why we all need to check our bank statements.

Q I have been told to expect a £100 fine because I missed the January 31 deadline for filing my tax return online. Is there any appeal against this? **CR**

A You have told me that when you went to the Revenue website to file your tax return, you were asked to register. You were then advised you would be sent confirmation details, allowing you to file online, but those details arrived after the deadline because they were sent by post for security reasons. There is an appeal procedure, but according to the tax man it is meant for people who were ill, or whose vital documents had been lost in a flood or fire. As you had nine months to file your return, it is unlikely an appeal would succeed.

Q My grandfather had shares in Abbey National, that became shares in Santander when it took over. He died recently, and my two brothers and I are supposed to divide the small holding of shares, so none of us will end up with much. Could we sign them over to charity instead? **NR**

A If you have a favourite charity, you could certainly hand over the shares. Or you could contact Sharegift (020 7930 3737), which is a charity that turns unwanted shares into cash for good causes, and deals with the necessary paperwork.

■ If you have a personal-finance question, write to Tony Hetherington, MyMoney24, Prospect House, Rouen Road, Norwich NR1 1RE. We regret that neither Tony nor the MyMoney24 team can enter into personal correspondence.

Tax cheats face increased scrutiny

Letters are about to land on the doormats of 900 tax cheats warning them that they under an increased level of scrutiny from the authorities.

Under a programme called Managing Deliberate Defaulters (MDD), known evaders – both individuals and businesses – will be closely monitored by HM Revenue & Customs.

The scrutiny is designed to prevent tax cheats from going back to their old ways once they have been punished for their past misdemeanours.

"Tax cheat check-ups will involve continued and close scrutiny – it is a real deterrent," said Steve

Hickman, of HM Revenue & Customs.

"If you are thinking about breaking the rules, remember that you could end up with HMRC on your back for five years."

The level and term of monitoring will depend on the seriousness of the previous offence, but it is thought that anyone who is in the programme will be monitored for at least two years.

HMRC said that as well as checking that returns are filed on time and all tax that is due is paid correctly, there will be regular reviews of people's tax affairs to check that any errors

or failings have been put right. "We have worked closely with the accountancy community to develop this programme and their help has been invaluable in getting the detail right," said Mr Hickman.

Tax evaders who fail to keep their affairs in order are being warned they will face increasingly intrusive interventions from the authorities, and they could be subject to further criminal proceedings.

Safeguards are also being put in place to ensure that deliberate defaulters do not escape scrutiny by starting new businesses under different names or identities.



EXPENSIVE BUSINESS: This young child could cost his parents more than £200,000 by the time he is 21.

Children still proving pricey

The cost of raising a child has risen by 50pc over the past eight years, and has now smashed through the £200,000 barrier.

Even over the past year, with the official rate of inflation going way over the Bank of England's 2pc target, the cost of bringing up children has risen quicker than costs elsewhere, with a 4.5pc increase over the past 12 months.

"Parents are all too aware that having a child comes with a hefty bill when you factor in things like childcare, schooling and holidays over a 21-year stretch," said Mark Jones, head of protection at LV=, which carried out a study into the cost of having children.

Childcare and education must feel like another mortgage payment for some parents as this is still the biggest outlay and shows no signs of slowing down, particularly when many universities are set to increase

By ADAM AIKEN
MyMoney24 editor

tuition fees up to £9,000 a year from 2012."

The cost of raising children has been presented by LV= on an average basis, and there are likely to be huge variations between parents of different means and in different situations.

But the figures – once they have been aggregated over a 21-year period – still bring home the impact of how much it can cost to bring up a child.

According to the research, parents typically spend £67,000 on childcare and babysitting; £55,000 on education; £18,000 on food; £15,000 on clothing; £14,000 on holidays; and £10,000 on hobbies and toys.

Even pocket money apparently costs an average of more than £4,500 for each child.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, children are most expensive between the ages

of 18 and 21, when they typically cost parents £14,365 a year. And with tuition fees set to see a huge increase, education is expected to form the biggest single area of expenditure for parents from next year.

More than three quarters of those who took part in the Cost of a Child Report said the economic climate had hit them hard, with 78pc having made cutbacks or economised over the past year because of financial pressures.

Holidays and short breaks have fallen victim, and there has also been a reduction in the purchase of new clothes by nearly half the parents who were surveyed.

Meanwhile, a majority of parents said they would be affected by the changes to child benefit.

Nearly a third of parents said they expected to have to cut back their spending as a direct result of losing the benefit, which can be worth up to £66 a month for a family's eldest child.

News

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On the blogs

Peter Sharkey:

Consider cheaper alternatives
this Isa season

Take some action to avoid driving up motoring costs

Motoring is getting even more expensive, leading drivers to take evasive action. **ADAM AIKEN** reports.

A growing number of motorists are expected to change their driving habits thanks to the seemingly ever-increasing cost of running a car.

Insurance premiums and fuel have both soared in recent months, with two thirds of all drivers saying that the huge costs have taken their toll.

The price of insuring a vehicle rose by more than 30pc last year, or by an average of 44p a day, according to research by Moneysupermarket.com, and the cost of filling a tank with petrol or diesel has been the subject of much comment in recent months.

Environmentalists will see some good coming out of all this, with the Moneysupermarket research suggesting that 8pc of motorists are looking to ditch their cars and make use of public transport instead.

But for those people who intend to keep using their vehicles, a few tips on bringing down the cost of motoring are in order.

"With escalating fuel prices hitting motorists hard in the pocket, I'm not surprised most are looking for ways to drive down the cost of getting behind the wheel – especially when the cost of insurance cover is on the rise, too," said Peter Harrison, of Moneysupermarket.

INSURANCE

Mr Harrison said: "Our analysis shows car insurance prices increased by 31pc in 2010. With prices on the up, it is more important than ever that drivers ensure they are shopping around for the best deals on insurance. Those who do will reap rewards and make their hard-earned cash go further."

"When newly insuring a car, providers may lure drivers in with competitive deals or special discounts in the first year which are not ordinarily available to existing policyholders. Rest assured that if you don't shop around in the second year, certain insurers will not hesitate to increase your renewal price – hardly the thanks deserved for being a loyal customer."

Moneysupermarket reckons that more than six million drivers a year automatically renew their policies. But by sticking with their existing insurers, motorists are wasting an average of £270 each by paying over the odds.

"Insurers count on customer apathy to reap the profits, so it is alarming that so many motorists are prepared to waste their hard-earned cash by not looking for better deals."

"Even if you think your quote can't



HIGHWAY HELL: Motorists are facing both rising costs and increasing levels of traffic on British roads.

be beaten, it takes only a few minutes to make sure you really do have the best value policy to suit your needs."

However, Ian Crowder, of AA Insurance, said it was important for people using price-comparison websites to compare like with like.

"You need to make sure you know what you're buying," he said.

"Quite often when you see a lower quote on a price-comparison site, it's because there is a higher excess or because things such as legal assistance on foreign cover is not included."

"Those things become bolt-on goodies instead, and once you have added them to the cost of your new quote, you can find you are back where you are started."

Something else that motorists – especially young drivers – can do to help get their premiums lower is avoid convictions.

"It might sound obvious, but keep you nose clean and your premiums

are likely to come down," said Mr Crowder.

"It might be uncool to drive within the speed limit, but if you avoid any claims or speeding convictions you might find your premium falls by as much as a third the first time you come to renew your insurance."

Meanwhile, if you change jobs or substantially cut your annual mileage, let your insurer know. The way you use your car can have a significant impact on what you pay.

FUEL EFFICIENCY

As well as the 8pc of drivers in the Moneysupermarket study who said they would be looking to switch to public transport because of rising motoring costs, nearly half of those asked said they would look to get more fuel-efficient cars when they replaced their current vehicles.

As well as being more economical with fuel, other benefits include a cut in road tax and savings on the

congestion charge when driving in central London. The AA's Mr Crowder also said he had recently come across a district council that allowed free parking for environmentally-friendly cars.

For the majority of drivers, though, it's going to be a case of taking measures to keep their existing fuel costs down.

Mr Crowder said taking a few simple steps, such as not carrying unnecessary loads around and removing unused roof-racks, would help cut the use of fuel.

He added: "Make sure your tyres are inflated correctly. If they are too soft, they will suck up fuel."

"The same thing will happen if your tracking is out. If you ever go over a large pothole or bump on to a kerb, have your tracking checked as soon as you can."

Each of these tips might save only a few pence, but the extra costs can soon add up if you don't take care.

PICK OF THE WEEK

In association with the experts at Moneyfacts.co.uk, we highlight some of the best new products launched this week.

Savings: Barclays

Barclays has launched its latest five-year fixed rate bond. The minimum investment is £500, which pays an annual rate of 4.25pc, or 4.17pc for monthly interest. Savers with deposits of £50,000 or above will receive a rate of 4.75pc, or 4.65pc for monthly interest. Further additions are not allowed and, as with many fixed-rate deals, no earlier access is permitted. Investors must be aged 18 and over and can operate this account in branch only.

Why is it good? This is amongst the market-leading long-term bonds, as long as investors have £50,000 or more to invest. Savers must ensure they are committed to locking funds away for the duration of the term.

Savings: Nationwide

The popular Mysave Online Plus account has been relaunched, paying a monthly rate of 2.91pc, including a 1.41pc bonus for 12 months. Investments range between £1,000 and £3m. Investors can make one penalty-free withdrawal a year. If more than one is made within a 12-month period, the rate will reduce to 0.1pc for the month in which it was made. All withdrawals must be made via a nominated account. Savers must be 16 and over for this online-only account.

Why is it good? This latest deal from Nationwide heads straight to the top of the no-notice internet market with its competitive rate, including a bonus for 12 months. Whilst this is very appealing, savers must remember that only one penalty-free withdrawal is allowed a year, otherwise there is a penalty.

Mortgages: Co-operative Bank

The Co-op has reviewed its fixed-rate mortgage range. The five-year rate of 6.09pc has been reduced to 5.89pc until May 31, 2016. The maximum loan-to-value is 90pc and a fee of £999 is payable. The deal also offers a host of flexible features such as the options to make overpayments and underpayments and to take payment holidays.

Why is it good? A rate reduction of 0.2pc means this five-year deal features as one of the lower rates in the market. The high LTV will please borrowers with limited deposits, while a fee of £999 plus many features help to heighten its appeal.

Mortgages: Yorkshire Building Society

The Yorkshire has increased selected rates across its fixed range. But despite a rate increase of 0.4pc, the two-year deal at 3.79pc still offers borrowers a good overall product with a maximum LTV of 75pc and a fee of £495. A plethora of incentives are also offered. First and second-time buyers can enjoy £250 rebates, remortgagors will receive free legal fees and all borrowers enjoy free valuations.

Overpayments of up to 10pc of the outstanding balance can be made.

Why is it good? The two-year product of 3.79pc remains competitive and stands out, mainly due to the low fee of £495 and the incentives.

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INSIDE THIS WEEK

BUSINESSES are being urged to back The Prince's Trust Enterprise Programme, with the incentive of a potential £360,000 boost to the Kent economy. Trust officials say further support will provide more unemployed 18- to 30-year-olds with the skills and know-how required to set up their own companies. It is estimated this could bring £360,000 to Kent in the next three years. See our report inside.

**SIMON ROBINSON**

BUSINESS EDITOR

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Slick tourism campaign launches second phase



MAJESTIC: Dover Castle as featured in the Kent Contemporary campaign's next phase

By **SIMON ROBINSON**simon.robinson@kosmedia.co.uk

VISIT Kent has launched the second phase of its eye-catching tourism marketing campaign.

The first set of Kent Contemporary advertising photographs was posted on billboards, trains and railway and Underground stations between May and October, last year.

They proved a hit – persuading thousands of visitors to venture into the county and helping to deliver an £18 million boost to the Kent economy, a 47:1 return on investment for the five-month campaign.

The second wave of photos includes shots of Dover Castle, Folkestone's Creative Quarter, Chatham Historic Dockyard and kite-surfers at Greatstone.

A Visit Kent official said: "Independent research into the first phase of the £400,000 campaign, which included photographs of Hever Castle, Botany Bay and the Goods Shed at Canterbury, revealed a 47:1 return on investment between May and October, last year.

"They generated 79,000 additional overnight



ARTISTIC: Creative Quarter in Folkestone

trips and short breaks to the county, 221,260 additional visitor nights worth almost £11m, and 196,375 day trips from outside Kent, with visitors spending £7,853,000.

"Furthermore, but not included in the economic impact figures, the campaign encouraged Kent and Medway residents to take more overnight trips and day trips within the county with a total value of just under £11m."

Businesses across the county are being urged to support the Kent Contemporary brand.

Speaking at the launch of the Visit Kent brand toolkit at the Turner Contemporary last week, M&C Saatchi ad expert Alice McEvoy explained the thinking behind the campaign.

She said: "We know from research that when people consider taking a short break or holiday, Kent is often overlooked in favour of other areas.

"So in order to increase the number of visitors, we know we need to change and improve the perception of the county as a desirable place to visit. We decided to use the strength and power of 'Kent, the Garden of England' but with 'use your garden' as a way to present the county in a more modern, relevant and contemporary way."

"The campaign, with its stunning images, provides a creative inspiration for all of us who market Kent to visitors. But we can't do everything. We need the help and involvement of businesses across the county."

"If we all tell the same story, it will add up to a much more powerful image for Kent. And that means more awareness, more impact and more visitors."

• *The Kent Contemporary images were taken by photographer Jean Luc Bernard.*

Minister's Pfizer site assurance to MP

SCIENCE minister David Willetts has said Pfizer's Sandwich site will have an "active" and "great" future. Mr Willetts gave the assurance in Parliament after Thanet South MP Laura Sandys asked what his vision was for the research-and-development base and its employees.

He admitted the closure posed a "very serious challenge" but said the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills was doing its best to tackle the problem.

Mr Willetts suggested the site could be developed and used by multiple small research businesses, enabling it to benefit from the new trend emerging in the pharmaceutical sector, where outsourcing to smaller R&D companies is taking place. Ms Sandys said the minister was pushing

to ensure east Kent remained a world-renowned centre for research.

She said: "The economic task force – formed to secure investment and attract businesses to the site – has met for the second time.

"Within the next 30 days, we have committed to produce a comprehensive report on all the possible options for the site.

"All the important steps have been taken and with the support of east Kent MPs I am committed to ensuring the jobs stay in the area and that we maximise the huge potential of what is a state-of-the-art site."

Pfizer workers raised a number of concerns during an employment law question-and-answer session. Barrister Paul Tapsell, from Becket

Chambers in Canterbury, spoke to employees about redundancy, the consultation process, compensation packages and legal advice.

A spokesman at Fosters Law, which has offices in Broadstairs, Canterbury and Herne Bay, said staff who attended the meeting in Ramsgate raised a number of concerns, including relocation, issues with transfers and the differences between statutory and contractual compensation packages.

Some 2,400 jobs are at risk after the pharmaceutical giant announced it was pulling out of Sandwich, but the figure is expected to be much higher when taking into account contracts such as cleaning and catering. This could push the figure as high as 5,400.



Comment

THE Turner Contemporary story will enter a new chapter when it finally opens in two months' time. From that moment, all talk of the gallery's drawn-out transition from conception to concrete – a process that has taken more than a decade – will become redundant.

As soon as the first visitor steps through the door, the only relevant question, from a strictly business position, will be whether it works as a sustainable tourist attraction.

Turner Contemporary chiefs have talked up the gallery's appeal, claiming it will draw 156,000 visitors a year to east Kent.

Assuming this figure is correct, that works out as 3,000 Turner tourists every week.

While I don't doubt the gallery's pulling power, I question whether Margate as a whole is ready to accommodate its new guests to such an extent that they'll want to make a repeat visit.

Tellingly, the Turner team have identified this concern as a major factor in the overall success of the cultural project.

Chairman of trustees John Kampfner spoke last week of his vision of east Kent becoming one of Europe's top cultural destinations.

But at the same time he warned that this dream was threatened by bad service from Turner Contemporary's supporting tourist industries – bars, cafés, taxis, hotels, restaurants and so on.

Kampfner pointed to the example of Bilbao, which has been rejuvenated since the Guggenheim Museum opened in 1997.

Maybe I'm being cynical, but I fear it will take more than a new gallery and 'service with a smile' to transform visitors' impressions of Margate's tourist offerings from ageing arcades and a run-down beachfront to capital of culture.

Let's hope I'm wrong and that the visitors flock to Turner and the seaside in their thousands for many years to come.

Time will tell, starting when the gallery opens its doors for the first time on Saturday, April 16.

BUSINESS EDITOR, SIMON ROBINSON
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GAME ON: From left, Richard Marshall of NatWest, ICON MD John Francis, SLS Group MD Giles Stanford, Dave Weller of ICON and Richard Gower of NatWest

Winning combination

BRANDING business ICON has completed its acquisition of events firm SLS Group.

The Kent-based company, which operates in the sports, commercial and cultural markets, bought the company in a £1 million deal.

Managing director John Francis said: 'ICON have worked with SLS on high-profile events, including last year's Ryder Cup, and have been aware for some time of the quality of their work and people.'

'We are delighted to have been able to agree this acquisition and are confident SLS will enhance our offering to both new and existing clients.'

The acquisition went ahead with £500,000 support from NatWest.

The bank's business development director Richard Marshall said: 'Having supported ICON with their management buyout in October, 2008, we know the team well so didn't hesitate to support the acquisition of SLS Group. With the support of my colleague Richard Gower in

Maidstone, we have seen continued growth on the back of successful strategies and wish them well.'

Operating from its HQ in Sidcup, ICON employs 80 full-time staff based in the UK and overseas, working with clients from concept through to production and on-site implementation.

It has an impressive client list, including international and domestic cricket, FIFA, Wimbledon and the Ryder Cup, all served from their UK, Germany, Qatar, Dubai, Abu Dhabi and South Africa offices.



INTERACTIVE: Gordon Henderson with web assistant Jess McMahon

Online access and advice

TORY Gordon Henderson has become the first MP to launch a dedicated business website.

The Swale representative set up the Sittingbourne and Sheppey Business Link (www.blinkss.co.uk) last week.

Mr Henderson said he hoped the site would give business people access to the latest industry news and provide an immediate means of contacting him.

He said: 'One of my top priorities will be to help local companies get through the economic challenge our country faces. As and when the economic climate improves, I want those businesses to be better placed to expand and provide the jobs people need. One of the ways in which I can achieve that goal is by ensuring local business people have easy access to advice and are able to get quick answers to questions they have about Government policy.'

'As a first step I have set up the Sittingbourne and Sheppey Business Link website to provide the local business community with a direct line to me.'

A quick pitch at the science park



BUSINESS was in the air at the county's inaugural speed-networking event.

Following the format of speed-dating nights, each attendee was given a two-minute slot to pitch their company to potential clients before moving on the next seat. It is hoped the event at Kent Science Park, near Sittingbourne, will lead to lasting connections.

James Lanby, of Larkins Chartered Accountants, said: 'The format was perfect for making contacts I might not have had a chance to speak to otherwise. The event was very well organised and Kent Science Park is a great venue.'

Speed-networking events will be a regular feature of Kent Science Park's calendar, on the third Wednesday of every month.

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LOCATE in Kent has reached a new business landmark. The company has now helped 700 firms relocate or expand in the county since 1997, assisting in the creation of 26,000 jobs in the process.

One of the most recent out-of-county companies to turn to Locate in Kent for assistance was Jefferson Hunt.

The employment screening firm has moved from Essex to Wateringbury, near Maidstone, and plans to increase its workforce to about 20 within the next 12 months. The firm's Angus Buchanan praised Locate in Kent for its help with the company's move.

"During my three-year search for property in the county, Locate in Kent provided invaluable support and assistance and lists of properties to view," he said. "The agency is an excellent source of information and I was able to call on them when I needed to procure local services and was given excellent contacts, including IT and telecoms."

THE latest farming and fruit-growing products will be on display next week at the inaugural Agri-Expo South East show. The Detling Showground one-day event will feature more than 110 stands.

A spokesman said: "The day will concentrate on showing the farming community the latest products and innovations in the industry with a particular emphasis on fruit-growing.

"It will be an opportunity for farmers and growers to evaluate the benefits of new equipment, talk to manufacturers' representatives and see rival products side by side."

The Agri-Expo takes place on Tuesday.

FOUR sixth-formers have reached the regional finals of a national investment competition after making a killing on the stock market.

The Rainham School For Girls team, made up of Elwira Mroczko, Saira Sheikh, Henna Khan and Jaspreet Sandhu, returned a £21,000 profit on their original £100,000 virtual cash fund during a three-month period buying and selling shares on the FTSE 100.

Their succession of shrewd investments saw them placed 12th out of the 7,460 entrants across the country. They now move on to the South East finals. The overall winner will receive an all-expenses trip to New York, £2,000 for their school and £200 for each team member.

A NEW £14 million recycling plant will open in Swanley next month. The Ideal Waste Paper Co facility will create more than 60 jobs. The official opening is on Friday, March 4.

A spokesman for the family firm said: "This recycling plant is part of the company's expansion strategy to deliver high-quality, recyclable waste streams to avoid landfill. It will also have environmental benefits with a reduction in carbon miles."

A FREE event next month will offer businesses guidance on how to access grants from a 50 billion euro European Union pot.

The one-day workshop will explain how to use Framework 7 (FP7) to apply for cash to co-finance research, technological development and demonstration projects.

The event will be at Kent Science Park, near Sittingbourne, on Tuesday, March 8.

Site director James Speck said: "Getting funding is nearly always the crucial barrier to hi-tech research, and we all hope this workshop will encourage individuals with the expertise and big ideas to apply for money from the European pot.

"Kent has a great pedigree in R&D and we are keen to see that continue."

To register, call Jen Francis on 01795 506321 or email [jen.francis@ksp-uk.com](mailto:j.en.francis@ksp-uk.com).

Turner the tide



STUNNING: Margate's Turner Contemporary gallery opens in April, providing opportunities and challenges for east Kent tourism

TURNER Contemporary bosses have called on east Kent businesses to help turn the area into one of Europe's top cultural destinations, **writes Simon Robinson**.

The plea was made at Visit Kent's investors' meeting, at the Margate gallery on Thursday, February 17.

Speaking ahead of the venue's April launch, chairman of trustees John Kampfner said it was up to local businesses to ensure Turner Contemporary's expected 156,000 annual visitors came back to the area.

"This is a truly international venture we are about to unleash on the world," he said.

"Whatever you think will be the ramifications for tourism in east Kent, double it and add some more."

"Turner Contemporary will bring people from all over the world to the area. The decision these tourists then take whether or not to come back will be based on what the community can offer.

"We have the potential to build something

wonderful, but for every cold cup of coffee served and surly bed-and-breakfast worker people encounter one tourist will not come back.

"It's up to us to turn east Kent into one of Europe's top cultural destinations."

Turner Contemporary director Victoria Pomery said: "The arts have a key role in the Kent economy during 2011."

"Not only do we open, but there is the second Folkestone Triennial, the Marlowe Theatre reopens and the Canterbury Festival is working with arts organisations for their outdoor Blink event."

"There are also lots of other organisations doing great things in Kent. We are looking to draw 156,000 visitors to Turner Contemporary each year – that's our target and we're confident we can achieve it."

"Turner is going to benefit everyone – regionally, nationally and internationally."

Situated on Margate seafront, at the same site JMW Turner stayed when visiting the town, the Turner Contemporary will be the South East's largest exhibition space outside London when it opens on Saturday, April 16.



LIGHT FANTASTIC: View from inside the Turner Contemporary

FSB jobs plea to Coalition

THE Federation of Small Businesses has called on the Treasury to help counter the county's above-average rise in unemployment.

The call comes after figures revealed there had been a 6 per cent increase in the number of Kent workers joining the dole queue – three times higher than the national average.

This surge in unemployment does not take into effect Pfizer's decision to close its Sandwich site, leaving 2,400 jobs at risk, and far-reaching public sector cuts.

FSB Kent and Medway chairman Roger House said: "We are calling on Kent MPs, in particular

those in the deprived areas of the county, to persuade the Treasury to grant the National Insurance contribution benefit available in the west and the north of the UK to be applied in Kent to incentivise small businesses to take on new staff and boost employment opportunities.

"If the Government is serious about the private sector and small businesses pulling the country out of recession, it cannot continue to regulate and suck finance out of businesses."

"They must create a commercial environment where business is valued and is confident to expand and create new jobs."

Castle's planned winter-hours cut alarms port

TOURISM chiefs have warned of the harmful impact that temporarily closing Dover Castle could have on the port's hospitality industry.

The business support manager at Channel Chamber of Commerce, Roger Walkden, said plans by English Heritage to close during winter weekdays could leave many accommodation and retail businesses struggling through the colder months.

Although the former B&B owner admitted many tourists travelled straight to the castle without coming to the town, he said businesses would still feel the strain.

"In the summer they do reasonably well, but there are still bills to pay in the winter," he said.

"The impact will be felt in accommodation, hospitality and retail businesses. I don't think it will necessarily lead to them closing down, although some may come close to it. Some will really struggle."

Detrimental

Margaret Reidy, of Number One Guest House in Castle Street, said: "Most people feel it's going to have a detrimental effect."

English Heritage is consulting staff on plans to restrict winter opening at Dover Castle to weekends after a 32 per cent cut in Government grants. It could mean the loss of 40 jobs at the castle.

English Heritage says that just 13 per cent of the castle's annual visitors were outside the summer season, but with 355,000 visiting between 2009 and 2010, this figure is still a high 46,000.

A spokesman said English Heritage regularly reviewed its opening hours.

"Having looked at visitor patterns, and bearing in mind the 32 per cent cut to our grant in future years, English Heritage is proposing to adjust winter opening times with effect from November.

"Over the next three months, English Heritage will be consulting with staff about these proposed changes."

A decision will be made at the end of the three-month consultation period.



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Eastern brewing promise fulfilled to Sheps' delight

SHEPHERD Neame picked up a gold and two silver awards at the brewing 'Oscars'.

The Faversham firm won gold and silver in the keg-lager category, for Japanese lager Asahi and Chinese Sun Lik.

Both are brewed under licence in Kent.

Sheps' Whitstable Bay Organic Ale claimed the silver award in the small-pack ale category.

Production and distribution director Tom Falcon said: "We're delighted to have been rewarded with three medals in such a prestigious and long-running awards scheme.

"We brew Asahi and Sun Lik to meet the exacting standards of our international partners, and it's fantastic to see our brewers recognised for this. We are pleased to see one of our Kentish ales selected as a winner, too."

The Brewing Industry International Awards are now in their 125th year. This year there were almost 800 entries across nine categories, divided into 32 classes according to alcohol content.

The awards were judged at the National Brewery Centre in Burton-upon-Trent.

A presentation ceremony will take place at Guildhall, London, on April 12.

Sheps has also been short-listed for a prize at the Enjoy England Awards for Excellence.

The Kent company has been named as a finalist in the small visitor attraction of the year category and is up against three other tourist destinations for the accolade.

Shepherd Neame visitor centre manager Graham Hukins said: "We are delighted to have been announced as finalists for this national award. This is a real boost for the team, who have worked exceptionally hard to provide a first-class experience for our visitors."

Attractions are reviewed by independent assessors and judged by industry experts. The overall winners of each category will be announced at a ceremony in Birmingham on Friday, April 15.

Driven man has

KOSmedia BUSINESS WEEK

THE BIG INTERVIEW



Autotrader co-founder Paul Gibbons's above-par sales and marketing efforts have allowed him the time to focus on achieving below-par golf scores.

The former sausage salesman honed his selling craft at the Reading Evening Post before launching the Thames Valley Trader – the template for the national Autotrader publication – with colleague John Madejski, current chairman of Reading FC.

After the pair sold their publishing firm in 1998, he moved into the world of golf and set about building his four-course portfolio. He told Business Editor SIMON ROBINSON how both a careers adviser and newspaper proprietor Eddy Shah had a hand in securing his success



PAUL GIBBONS

GOLF-COURSE-owner Paul Gibbons has the misguided fears of his school careers adviser to thank in part for his hugely successful business career.

After dismissing Gibbons's preferred professions – a chef or a tailor – as skills soon to be lost to industrial machines, he pointed the 15-year-old to Reading high street and told him to get a job in retail.

The young Gibbons took heed of the careers officer's somewhat skewed advice and in doing so found his true calling in sales and marketing.

For while the chef and tailoring trades may have lost a good worker, it's unlikely these professions would have led Gibbons to the lofty position he finds himself in today as the joint owner of Leaderboard, a holding company he and his wife run and that boasts four top golf courses, two four-star hotels and a state-of-the-art driving range.

It is in the plush clubhouse of Gibbons's sole Kent club, the 200-acre Chart Hills course, near Biddenden, that I ask the 63-year-old how he came to take his first step into the world of business.

"The careers officer told me not to become a chef as everything would soon be pre-packed

food. As for tailoring, he said the skill would soon be gone, that it would all be done with machinery and that I didn't want to work in a factory. He told me to go and get a job in the high street. So I went to Burtons. I enjoyed what I was doing and quickly realised that selling and marketing was what I wanted to do."

After further honing his teenage selling talents flogging sausages and pies, then televisions and white goods, Gibbons got a job at the Reading Evening Post.

It was here he learned and mastered the craft of selling. He said: "I took on every sales and marketing course they had going and over time moved through all the classified and run-of-paper departments.

"I was the leading salesman for the Evening Post's publishers, Thames Regional Newspapers, for three years in a row, which I think is quite an achievement. I'm proud of that."

When asked how he had managed to reign supreme as the department's top seller, Gibbons said: "One of the biggest parts of selling is listening. Quite often you hear someone say 'He's got to be a good salesman, he's got the gift of the gab' – but it's not actually true.

"It's the guy who can ask the right question, listen for the answer and use that answer to help him achieve his objective who is the best seller."

HAVING mastered the art of newspaper sales, Gibbons was ready for his next challenge. It would turn out to be a multi-million-pound move as Gibbons and Evening Post sales colleague John Madejski, now the chairman of Reading FC, launched the Thames Valley Trader – a precursor to what is now known as the Autotrader.

Gibbons said: "I'd known John for about six years. We worked in the same office and decided we wanted to go into business together. The only problem was that we

didn't know quite what to do. John went on holiday to California and brought back a very basic idea of Trader."

The pair pushed ahead with this plan and set up their own company, Hurst Publishing.

Gibbons said: "The biggest marketplace in Reading at that time was secondhand cars, so we decided that this was the industry we needed to move into.

"The problem was that we blindly thought the whole world was waiting for the product, so we had 200,000 leaflets explaining who we were and what we were doing distributed and then just waited for the phone to ring.

"It didn't. We were two weeks away from the launch date and slowly realised we had to go and sell the whole thing. We were working seven days a week.

"Monday was deadline day and Tuesday was spent at the typesetter's, reading the pages off. We'd hit the road on Wednesday to Friday, selling from 8.30am, before cold-calling anyone who was selling their cars in the local newspaper, from 6.30pm to 9.30pm.

"Then on Saturday and Sunday we'd go out and take photos. We grafted. It was tough, but it worked."

The first edition of the Thames Valley Trader was 24 pages. It sold 2,000 copies.

The next 18 months were similar seven-day

week slogs.

The publishing pair's breakthrough came via Manchester-based newsman Eddy Shah's confrontations with the unions at his Warrington print works in 1983.

Gibbons explained: "When Eddy took on the unions, the whole industry up there was going on strike and other papers in the South would go on strike to support. Our typesetters were non-union and the printers were non-union, so we always published, even when papers in the area were all on strike.

"The garages had to advertise somewhere during these strikes, so we started putting on eight pages a week.

"We had been going for 18 months doing 56 pages per week. After two years we were up to 80/90 pages and then we were away.

"It took us 18 months of graft and concern trying to hold it up, but we had made it when Eddy took on the unions.

"I played golf with him here at Chart Hills



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come to golfing fore

about five years ago and the first thing I did was shake his hand and thank him.

"He said he wanted a share of the profits, but I told him he was too late."

AUTOTRADER went national in 1982. Hurst Publishing had 52 titles by the time it was sold in 1998 for £260 million, at which point Gibbons took a well-deserved break.

He said: "I sold the business and went abroad for three months to think about what I wanted to do.

"I came back and decided to get my golf together. I was having golf lessons at my local club when the pro asked me if I was going to buy Sandford Springs course in Hampshire.

"I went and had a look with my wife,

Jennifer, who was keen for me to take it on.

"Whether she just wanted me out the house I'm not sure. I believed golf could be saleable. It's very much a saleable product.

"Unfortunately, I came in just at the peak of the market, at the point when golf was going to take a slide. A report in the 1980s said there were not enough clubs in the country, and there were 50 people waiting to get on the books of each club.

"What people hadn't realised was that people were signing three or four waiting lists.

"So all these golf clubs were built and then there weren't enough people to play them. It became a competitive marketplace in the wrong direction.

"Clubs tried to compete on price rather than quality and reputation. What we've done is get a high level of consistency on both the course and in the clubhouse.

"I've based everything on what I would want as an amateur golfer and a business executive. Priority No 1 is making sure our course is in the best condition any time of the year.

"Priority No 1 A is to make sure the clubhouse is as good as it can be, that the staff want to show it that way as well and that the service is top-drawer."

Gibbons's golf company, Leaderboard, bought Chart Hills in 2001. The club was redesigned by six-times Major winner Sir Nick Faldo and reopened in August, 2003. Among its signature features are a unique island green on the par-three 17th hole and 130 bunkers, including 'The Anaconda' on the fifth hole, which at 200 yards is the longest bunker in Europe.

The course is bracing itself for the arrival of thousands of golfing fans to the area next year when The Open is held in Sandwich.

PAUL'S TOP TIPS

- Work hard, with full commitment to success
- Know your product inside out
- Know your marketplace and how your product sits within it
- Know all the benefits and unique selling points of your product
- Borrow from the bank as close to zero as you can get
- Always resist giving or selling shares, but instead offer a percentage of the profit as a bonus on a short-term scheme
- If you can achieve the above, then you should always be happy and enjoy working for yourself



ROUGH AND SMOOTH:
The first hole at the Sir
Nick Faldo-designed
Chart Hills course

Gibbons said: "I think the Open will bring an awful lot to the area and Kent in particular.

"It will create revenue for the area of at least £30m. Foreign golf fans will flock into the UK, joined by fans from across the country and these people will all want accommodation, transport, food and drink while they're here. We're already taking bookings and on one day we're fully booked."

Gibbons's latest venture is the Leaderboard golf website, which includes news and a range of video tutorials. It was launched exactly 34 years after Gibbons set up Trader, something he insists came about completely by chance.

As omens go, that's a fairly good one.

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Insolvency trend shows slight fall

THE latest insolvency figures show a 3 per cent fall in Kent bankruptcy petitions.

The Ministry of Justice statistics reveal that in the three months to December 2010 there were 362 cases of business people declaring themselves bankrupt, down on the same period in the previous year.

Tunbridge Wells reported a decrease of 37 per cent, but Medway saw a 39 per cent rise, equating to 121 applications. Across England and Wales, there was a 22 per cent drop in people petitioning for their own bankruptcy, to 10,646 cases. Throughout 2010 as a whole, the figures show the overall number of bankruptcy petitions fell by more than 14 per cent compared with 2009.

Chris Nutting, director of personal insolvency at KPMG, said: "While it is encouraging that the headline figures show overall bankruptcy numbers have dropped, it should not be taken as evidence that people have solved their financial problems.

"Statistics released by the Insolvency Service last week showed that alternative insolvency procedures such as Individual Voluntary Arrangements (IVAs) and Debt Relief Orders (DROs) have had dramatic increases, leading to record numbers of personal insolvencies in 2010.

"At the same time, our research has shown creditors are losing £20 million a day due to insolvencies. As well as an increase in personal insolvency numbers, there is evidence that more people are turning to informal arrangements, such as debt-management plans, with their creditors.

"As the demand for impartial debt advice increases, it's a shame there are dramatic cuts to the funding for the free debt advice sector.

"As household budgets come under increasing pressure, it is vital that people speak to creditors at the earliest opportunity to find practical solutions to their underlying financial problems."

Stimulating meeting of minds aims to put Gateway in the zone



LOCAL ANGLE: KCC leader Paul Carter

By SIMON ROBINSON

simon.robinson@kosmedia.co.uk

THAMES Gateway bosses have discussed plans to turn the north Kent corridor into a new economic development zone.

The proposal was outlined at the first meeting of the locally-led Thames Gateway Strategic Group (TGSG) – made up of politicians and business leaders – at Canary Wharf, London.

Kent County Council leader Paul Carter said the group could help secure "economic prosperity" for the area.

"The Thames Gateway has enormous economic potential which can bring prosperity and jobs to north Kent," he said.

Potential

"By unlocking its potential with new infrastructure – including a third Thames Crossing – and encouraging development, we can create an additional 113,000 jobs in north Kent and south Essex over the next 20 years. It will be the task of the group to get things moving to secure economic prosperity for the area to benefit local businesses and people.

"By working together, we can find new ways of financing this growth, generating new inward investment and increasing the skills of the local workforce."

Thames Gateway minister Bob Neill praised the group for its initiative in driving growth in the region.

He said: "I'm delighted that for the first time local-authority leaders and business partners have come together to take charge of growing the Thames Gateway.

"Their first key decision – to bid for the Thames Gateway to become an economic



GATEWAY: Coalition minister Bob Neill

development zone – is a bold proposal that would incentivise the area's growth, rather than relying on Government grants.

"It shows the new thinking that is coming from freeing partners from central government diktat, which I welcome. I will now work with the group to open formal discussions with my colleagues across Government. I look forward to working with the group in the months and years ahead. I'm sure we'll see many more proposals from the new group which will stimulate economic growth benefiting all the Thames Gateway's communities."

After the meeting, a TGSG joint statement read: "The decisions taken at our first meeting show our commitment and that we mean business."

"Just as it took an enterprise zone to help Canary Wharf to become the powerhouse of London, we are now calling for a new type of economic development zone to carry on building on the work that has already taken place in the Thames Gateway."



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Crackdown on tax-credit fraud

FRAUDULENT self-employed tax-credit claimants are being targeted by HM Revenue and Customs.

HMRC teams have been examining tax-credit awards being paid to the self-employed and are writing to any whose claims may not be genuine or accurate.

Kent's 17,800 self-employed tax-credit claimants are being warned that they face a penalty if they fail to tell HMRC promptly of any changes in income and, in the case of deliberate fraud, criminal prosecution and imprisonment.

Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury David Gauke said: "HMRC is determined to take a tough approach to fraud by tax credit claimants."

"Last year the Government launched proposals to reduce the billions lost to tax credit error and fraud every year. These losses are unaffordable and unacceptable."

HMRC will use credit-reference agencies and data-matching to spot patterns of fraud.

The department is also employing additional investigators and are examining each claim in high-fraud areas.

Enterprising spirit of youth

A YOUTH enterprise scheme could add up to £360,000 to the county's economy over the next three years, a new report has revealed, **writes Simon Robinson**.

The Prince's Trust Enterprise Programme has supported more than 330 unemployed 18- to 30-year-olds in the South East – including 72 in Kent – since its launch in January, 2010.

Bosses at the youth charity are now urging local government, businesses and individuals across the county to offer more support and funding, saying it could give the Kent economy a boost.

The charity's report, entitled Today's Young People – Tomorrow's Economy, estimates the scheme could add up to £1.6 million to the South East economy in three years, with Kent accounting for £360,000 of that amount.

The sum takes into account the potential financial ben-

efits of helping local young people into jobs or starting them up in business in terms of earnings. On top of this figure, there are savings to the public purse in terms of Jobseeker's Allowance.

The Prince's Trust's London and South East enterprise head Ben Marson said: "The growing success of our Enterprise Programme shows that young people in Kent are very entrepreneurial. By harnessing their enthusiasm for enterprise, not only will the public purse save on benefits, but Kent's economy stands to gain through young people's skills and talents.

"Now we need further funds to support more young people across the region, helping them escape long-term unemployment and poverty for good.

"Many of these young people will become the employers of tomorrow, providing services Kent needs. By helping today's young people, we are investing in tomorrow's economy."



PRINCE CHARLES

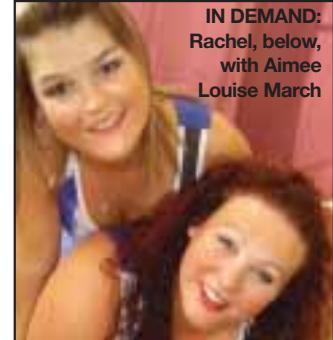
success, and In Demand have 46 gigs lined up over the next year.

Rachel said: "Running my own business means I can take my daughter along to rehearsals and fit work around being a mum."

Rachel hopes to set up her own entertainment agency, representing singers, comedians and magicians. She said: "One day, I hope I'll be able to help other young people find work in the entertainment industry."

This time last year, Rachel was unemployed and on Income Support. Today, she runs a successful business doing something she has always been passionate about.

She said: "Getting to this stage has been a lot of hard work, but I wouldn't have been able to do it without the help of The Prince's Trust. I would advise any young person hoping to set up their own business to get in touch with the charity."



IN DEMAND:
Rachel, below,
with Aimee
Louise March

CASE STUDY 1



BECKY Ashton, 24, is a trained dance teacher but found it impossible to get work when she moved to Chatham just over a year ago.

She was out of work for a depressing six months and found it extremely difficult to get a job. She said: "I moved to a new area to be with my partner and underestimated how hard it would be to find work. I started applying for all kinds of jobs, but hardly anything was available due to the recession and I was getting increasingly desperate."

Becky felt guilty for relying on her family for support and started to worry about money and her future.

Becky felt setting up her own dance company could be the solution but had no idea about how to run a business. She decided to approach The Prince's Trust, which runs an enterprise programme to help unemployed young people gain the skills and confidence to set up their own businesses.

As part of the programme, Becky attended a four-day Explore Enterprise course, which taught essential skills such as how to write a business plan, how to manage accounts and how to get funding. She decided to name her business the Right Step Dance Company and was awarded a start-up loan and a business mentor.

Becky said: "My mentor has been incredibly helpful. As an ex-banker,

she has been able to help me manage my money better and has given me the confidence to do things I wouldn't have considered before. He has also introduced me to important business contacts."

Within a few months, Becky had developed contacts with several schools and care homes and was awarded funding as part of a fitness campaign run by a supermarket chain.

She said: "Having my own business and my own website suddenly made people take notice of me."

Today, Right Step is a hugely successful community dance company, teaching dance in schools, dance clubs, care homes and children's centres across Kent. Becky has four other dance teachers working with her on a self-employed basis.

In just seven months, Becky has transformed her life, and she now wants to help other aspiring dance teachers to do the same. She has a young dance teacher shadowing her whom she hopes will be able to her own classes soon.

Becky said: "Working as a dance teacher is so rewarding. It's great to see how much my students, who range from five to 99 years old, enjoy their lessons. I'm really excited about seeing my company grow and really grateful to The Prince's Trust for helping me to do something I love."

CASE STUDY 2

MARIE Simpson, 27, from Medway, was unemployed for nine months after being made redundant from her job as a hairdresser in February, 2009.

At the time, few salons were taking on staff and Marie became increasingly worried about being out of work.

She said: "I had a young daughter to look after and it was very difficult trying to get by on Income Support alone. I applied for so many jobs, but all the salons were cutting back on staff."

Marie knew she needed to be back at work and found being home all day depressing. She said: "Some days, I would take my daughter to school and then go back to bed because there was nothing else to do."

Marie realised setting up her own hairdressing business could be the only solution but had no idea where to start. However, when a friend started The Prince's Trust Enterprise Programme, she decided to sign up.



Prince's Trust

She said: "I went on a four-day Explore Enterprise course which was really inspiring. For the first time, I felt like setting up my own business was something I could actually achieve."

After the course, Marie decided to set up Distinct Styles, a mobile hairdressing business in Medway. She was given a business mentor who was able to advise on all areas of running a business.

Marie said: "I couldn't have set up my business without a mentor. She is always there to listen to my ideas, calm me down and answer any questions. A year later, I still call her all the time."

Distinct Styles is now a successful business and Marie is in talks with local salon Flash Divas to work with them in their photographic studio a few days a week. She is also keen to help other young people and teaches hairdressing.

Marie said: "I'm so grateful to The Prince's Trust for helping me to start up my own business. I'm proud of what I've achieved so far and would like to use my experience to help other young people find work."

CASE STUDY 3

RACHEL Hamlin, from Margate, always dreamed of becoming a singer and spent years working in holiday parks around the UK.

However, she had to give up work when her daughter was born and found it impossible to combine her love of singing with the reality of life as a single mum. She was unemployed for just under a year and didn't know what to do next.

She said: "I was living on benefits and staying at home all day. I had very little self-respect and no pride in what I was doing."

Rachel, 26, came up with a plan to set up her own singing duo, In Demand, which would tour in pubs,

clubs and holiday parks around the country. She felt running her own business would make it easier to work around looking after her daughter, as she would be able to choose when and where she worked. Rachel had no idea how to run a business but was put in touch with The Prince's Trust via Business Link.

She said: "The trust's enterprise course course was fantastic. It taught me so much – such as how to write a business plan and manage accounts and taxes. Without this support, my idea to set up In Demand would have remained just that – an idea."

Less than a year after joining the Enterprise Programme, Rachel's duo has become a huge

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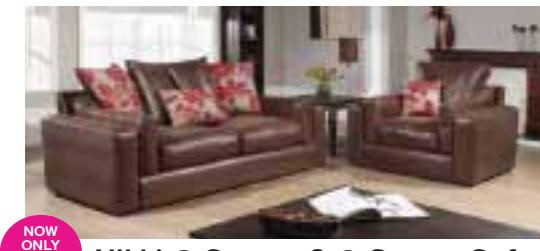


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